

**Karl Barth and the Metatheological Dilemma.
Barth, Wittgenstein and the Metadilemmas of the Enlightenment.**

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Declaration

I hereby declare that both this thesis and the research upon which it is based are my own work.

Signed,

Neil Beaton MacDonald

Thesis Abstract

It is the argument of this thesis that Barth's theology can be properly understood only if it is construed as an attempted resolution of the *metatheological dilemma* Franz Overbeck set for theology. To that extent, the definitive parameters of the problematic which Barth's theology made its own, the underlying historical dynamic without which the identity of Barth's theology would remain hidden, have no historical precedent other than the later stages of the Enlightenment and Hume and Kant. Though Overbeck was separated from Hume by more than a century, he pushed the metatheological dilemma implicit in Hume to its explicit logical conclusion.

It can be shown that not only is it the case Overbeck's metatheological dilemma informs *Romans II*, it is the final horizon for *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* and the *Church Dogmatics*. Indeed, it is clear that Barth's answer to Overbeck - *sui generis* theological truth - is already implicit in Barth's theological development as early as his lecture "The Strange New World Within the Bible". Barth's encounter with Overbeck is responsible for the one thing missing from "The Strange New World Within the Bible" - the dialectical irony ever present in Barth's theology from *Romans II* onwards.

The later and earlier philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein is the unifying metanarrative uncovering the specific means by which Barth attempted to achieve his objectives. Both the early and later philosophy contend with a metadilemma, Hume's metaphilosophical dilemma. *Romans II* is best understood if it is assimilated into the tradition of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* represented by key figures of "Wittgenstein's Vienna" - Karl Kraus, Arnold Schoenberg and Adolf Loos. Without retracting one whit the central insights of *Romans II*, *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum* and the *Church Dogmatics* recapitulate the later Wittgenstein's attack on epistemological realism, a doctrine antithetical to the resolution of the metatheological dilemma.

A final chapter sets Barth's doctrine of the Holy Spirit within the context of Barth's commitment to *sui generis* theology, showing in particular that Barth repudiated a realist hermeneutic, and, as a corollary of his whole position, subordinated meaning to (*sui generis*) truth.

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Abbreviations

Barth

- CR II** *Romans 1922*, translated by Sir Edwyn Hopkyns, (London, Oxford University Press, 1933).
- CD** *Church Dogmatics*, edited by G W Bromiley and T F Torrance, (Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1936-1969).
- FQI** *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum. Anselm's Proof of the Existence of God in the Context of his Theological Scheme* (London, 1960; reprinted Pittsburgh, The Pickwick Press, 1975).

Wittgenstein

- BB** *Blue and Brown Books Preliminary Studies for the 'Philosophical Investigations'* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1978).
- CV** *Culture and Value*, edited by G H von Wright in collaboration with Heiki Nyman, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1980).
- NB** *Notebooks 1914-1916*, edited by G H von Wright and G E M Anscombe, translated by G E M Anscombe, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1961).
- OC** *On Certainty*, edited by G E M Anscombe and G H von Wright, translated by Denis Paul and G E M Anscombe, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1969).
- PG** *Philosophical Grammar*, edited by R Rhees and translated by A Kenny, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1974).
- PI** *Philosophical Investigations*, edited by G E M Anscombe, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1953).
- TLP** *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, translated by D F Pears and B F McGuinness, (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961).
- Z** *Zettel*, edited by G E M Anscombe and G H Von Wright, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1981).

"It is much easier to point out the faults and errors
in the work of a great mind than to give a distinct
and full exposition of its value."

Schopenhauer

Criticism of the Kantian Philosophy

Introduction

Karl Barth and the Metatheological Dilemma. Barth, Wittgenstein and the Metadilemmas of the Enlightenment.

Karl Barth and Ludwig Wittgenstein did not meet during their lives. The closest they might have come would have been Berlin in 1906-7 when both studied in the then capital city of Germany, Wittgenstein an engineering student at the *Technische Hochschule*, Barth studying theology at the university. Otherwise, their paths did not cross. Barth's life was spent for the most part in Basel as university professor amidst an academic theological fraternity. Wittgenstein's domicile was less settled, but in the main it alternated between Vienna and Cambridge in England. He too was a university professor - at Cambridge - but in philosophy.

Barth did not at any time read Wittgenstein the philosopher. There is no evidence he was even aware that such a philosopher existed, or after 1951, had existed. To be sure, Barth possessed a scholarly appreciation of certain philosophers of the classical tradition. He knew Descartes' *Meditations*, Leibniz's *Theodicy* and Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (which book he had gone through twice with a fine tooth-comb).¹ Of the post-Kantian philosophers he had read Hegel and his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche.² Yet while it is true to say that Barth absorbed - however unconsciously - something material from these past philosophical masters, when it comes to his contemporaries he seems to have learned little, digested next to nothing. Certainly, he knew Husserl, Jaspers, Jean-Paul Sartre and Heidegger, but this knowledge at no time ever pretended to be anything other than one of mere acquaintance. Indeed, unless through personal acquaintance and accident of circumstances, unless his theological mission dovetailed with another's philosophical project at a particular moment in time - as

¹ Barth refers to and discusses such philosophers throughout the *Church Dogmatics*. See: K Barth, *CD III/1*, 350ff for Descartes; Barth, *CD III/4*, 316ff for Leibniz; Barth, *CD II/1*, 183, 270, 310f, 464 for Kant.

² For Barth's knowledge of Hegel, see M Welker, "Barth und Hegel. Zur Erkenntnis eines methodischen Verfahrens bei Barth", *Evangelischen Theologie* (1983), 307-328. See: Barth, *CD III/1* 334ff, 337ff, 405 for discussion of Schopenhauer; Barth, *CD III/2* 231ff, 277, 290 for Nietzsche.

in the case of Heinrich Scholz and Anselm - Barth had no genuine desire to learn from his philosopher contemporaries. And that, I am sure, would have precluded Barth learning from, or being influenced by, Wittgenstein had he read him.

On the other hand, Wittgenstein was in a position where he could have been influenced by Barth. He had read some Barth. His first impression of the Swiss theologian had been based on hearing, in 1930, some of *The Word of God and the Word of Man*. The immediate impression then conveyed was "one of great arrogance".³ Ten years later, he himself was reading Barth, most probably the first half-volume of the *Church Dogmatics*. This time he thought the "writing must have come from a remarkable religious experience".⁴ Although it was an altogether more positive reaction there is no reason not to think that all that had changed in the intervening years was Wittgenstein's evaluation. It was as if what had once provoked a charge of arrogance was now attributed to a religious experience. Finally, in 1950 Wittgenstein wrote down a remark in which Barth is mentioned by name. Again it is clear that he has *I/1* in mind. And again, it is as if what had been attributed to a religious experience reverted once more to being a cause for complaint:

How do I know that two people mean the same when each says he believes in God? And just the same goes for belief in the Trinity. A theology which insists on the use of certain particular words and phrases, and outlaws others, does not make anything clearer (Karl Barth). It gesticulates with words, as one might say, because it wants to say something and does not know how to express it. Practice gives words their sense.⁵

³ M O'C Drury, "Conversations with Wittgenstein", in R Rhees (ed), *Recollections of Wittgenstein* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1984), 119.

⁴ *Ibid*, 146. Were it not for the fact that Wittgenstein had in the past told Drury that Moore and he once tried to read Barth's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans together but "didn't get far with it and gave it up", (*Ibid*, 119) it would have been more reasonable - given the "ecstatic" nature of the text - to infer that Wittgenstein was speaking of Barth's *Römerbrief* or - given Drury's uncertainty over the date of this particular conversation - Sir Edwyn Hoskyns' translation of it. But unless he simply overlooked what appears to be his (and Moore's) earlier indifference to *Romans II*, it is more likely he was speaking of *Church Dogmatics I/1*.

⁵ L Wittgenstein, *CV*, 85. It is conceivable that Wittgenstein cites Barth *approvingly*, as a *counterexample* to, rather than an example of, the 'solipsists' he attacks in this remark. See Barth, *CD I/1*, 78. Yet it seems more likely that Wittgenstein read Barth's exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity in *I/1* § 8 and concluded that such trinitarian language was fraught with interpersonal translation difficulties.

Here Wittgenstein is critical of Barth's doctrine of the Trinity, a doctrine which Barth held very dear to his theological heart. And he criticises it from the vantage-point of one of his *own* central philosophical contentions, namely the impossibility of a private language and the consequent necessity for language to be grounded in communal use. Far from receiving him as a kindred spirit, Wittgenstein rejected Barth for reasons that were central to his own philosophy. In other words, not only did Wittgenstein (as we will see) misinterpret him, he misinterpreted him in terms of himself and his own philosophical preoccupations.⁶

What in fact Wittgenstein's charge tell us about is Wittgenstein himself. Objective disinterested scholar he was not.⁷ *Ceteris paribus*, most of Wittgenstein's observations on other thinkers tell us more about Wittgenstein and the animating forces in his intellectual life than about the thinker in question.

In this he resembled Barth. Barth too was no disinterested spectator of other academic products; accordingly his interpretation and criticism of other thinkers who struck a chord deep in his own work either euphoniously or cacophonously - Overbeck, St Anselm, Bultmann - are both exegetically and historically unreliable. One is told more about Barth than about them. In other words, Barth too was the type of academic not necessarily given to scholarly objectivity precisely because he saw others in terms of his own work and intensely held point of view.

But though it can be argued that Barth was more perceptive about the meaning and significance of his own work than either critics or admirers, this of itself does not warrant the conclusion that even he *fully* understood what he was

⁶ Wittgenstein's charge of linguistic solipsism continues to have some mileage even today. (The charge is dealt with in greater detail in chapter 4 of this thesis.) Ironically it tars Barth with the same brush that at least one contemporary scholar has taken to Wittgenstein himself. Wittgenstein's later philosophy advocates a form of voluntarism in our understanding of language. D Cupitt, *The Sea of Faith* (London, British Broadcasting Corporation, 1984), 241. The extreme version of this is H Küng's suggestion that for Wittgenstein the rules of language can be chosen with complete freedom. H Küng, *Does God Exist? An Answer for Today*, translated by E Quinn, (London, Collins, 1978), 461. That we are free to make up the rules of language, Wittgenstein would have found preposterous. For Barth that we are free to make up the rules of the doctrine of the Trinity was an idea he would have found equally preposterous.

⁷ G H von Wright, "Wittgenstein, A Biographical Sketch", *Wittgenstein* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1982), 32.

doing, fully understood the historical intellectual dynamics at work in his thought. Hegel described philosophy as 'our times apprehended in thought'. Philosophy at any one time in history represented a synthesis of thesis and antithesis, where this thesis and antithesis respectively had been a synthesis of another thesis and antithesis at an earlier stage of history. In the process of synthesis a process of *Aufhebung* preserves in each thesis and antithesis what is rational in each relative to the other and cancels out what is inconsistent in each relative to the other.

In theory then, each successive philosophy is a factorial product of the historical process: thesis + anti-thesis \rightarrow synthesis_a; thesis + anti-thesis \rightarrow synthesis_b; synthesis_a (thesis) + synthesis_b (anti-thesis) \rightarrow synthesis_c.

Transposed to the realm of Barth's theology, such a process would explain Gerhard Sauter's observation that for every position Barth takes up, another one can be found contradicting it; accordingly one is unable to affirm with any certainty what it is Barth actually said. Yet what is revealed at work in Barth's theology are the contours of an extremely subtle combination of historic intellectual forces, some set in motion by the Enlightenment, some set in motion after the time of the Enlightenment. Hume, Kant, the Enlightenment and Hegel are the principal participants in the conversation Barth carries on with the past and theological orthodoxy in particular. Barth's thought represents theology's attempted synthesis and resolution of all the major contradictions of thought up to Barth's own entrance into history.

However, what he did not supply and could not have supplied for such a complex thought-form was the appropriate metanarrative - the representation unifying and resolving all the apparently disparate and contradictory elements of his theology. No doubt, time's winged chariot at his back as he strove to complete the *Church Dogmatics* was one reason why Barth's relentless first-order discourse ceded very little to second-order discourse and synthesis. (To be sure, Barth did not completely exclude glimpses of a second-order discourse as when he said of *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* that it was a key to the *Church Dogmatics*; but such observations were of relatively limited value in providing access to the full metanarrative.) But the more profound explanation gives credence to the suggestion

made by Theodore Gill that Barth didn't know what he was doing.⁸ Thus some three years before his death he lamented:

No, I haven't yet heard the voice which whispered to Thomas: "You have written about me well." I continually have to ask myself why I did not state and express everything in such a way as to make impossible in advance the dreadful scenes you had to live through at Mainz.⁹

This is Barth in 1965 in reply to Helmut Gollwitzer, the latter having enquired of Barth whether he thought any of his interpreters had interpreted the *Church Dogmatics* accurately. The immediate historical context is the controversy between Gollwitzer and Herbert Braun, an account of which Barth had read in a recent publication.¹⁰

Barth's comment is a signal admission from a man who could not have been accused of writing too little. No, he says, he hasn't heard such a voice. Then comes the confession: mightn't this be due to the fact that he did not state and express himself in such a way as to render such misunderstanding impossible. And if so, inextricably caught up in this is the question *why*: why, he continually asks himself, did he not state and express himself in such a way as to render such misunderstanding impossible? Was Barth merely expressing his exasperation at not having stated the appropriate (local) metanarrative - at not having stated that which would have rendered misunderstanding a less likely prospect - when it was well within his power to do so? Or was it that he didn't know the metanarrative (or didn't know he didn't know the metanarrative)?

It is the argument of this thesis that Barth's theology can be properly understood only if it is construed as an attempted resolution of the *metatheological*

⁸ T Gill, "Barth and Mozart", *Theology Today*, Vol XLIII, No 3, (1986), 409. Actually what Gill says is:

"... I don't think Barth knew what he was doing - or at least, he didn't know how he was doing what he was doing. I mean he thought he was perfecting a science of theology, and I don't think he was doing that at all." *Ibid*, 409.

⁹ Barth to Prof. Helmut Gollwitzer, 12 March 1965 in Barth, *Letters 1961-1968*, translated by G W Bromiley, (Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1981), 186.

¹⁰ Barth relates in the same letter to Gollwitzer that he had read an account of the events at Mainz in *Post Bultmann locotum. Ein Diskussion zwischen Prof. D H Gollwitzer, Berlin, und Prof D H Braun, Mainz, am 13 Februar, 1964, in der Johannes-Gutenberg-Univ.*, 2 volumes. (Hamburg-Bergsedt, 1965).

dilemma Franz Overbeck set for theology. To that extent, the definitive parameters of the problematic which Barth's theology made its own, the underlying historical dynamic without which the identity of Barth's theology would remain hidden, have no historical precedent other than the later stages of the Enlightenment and Hume and Kant. Though Overbeck was separated from Hume by more than a century, he pushed the metatheological dilemma implicit in Hume to its explicit logical conclusion.

It can be shown that not only is it the case Overbeck's metatheological dilemma informs *Romans II*, it is the final horizon for *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* and the *Church Dogmatics*. Indeed, it is clear that Barth's answer to Overbeck - *sui generis* theological truth - is already implicit in Barth's theological development as early as his lecture "The Strange New World Within the Bible". Barth's encounter with Overbeck is responsible for the one thing missing from "The Strange New World Within the Bible" - the dialectical irony ever present in Barth's theology from *Romans II* onwards.

The later and earlier philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein is the unifying metanarrative uncovering the specific means by which Barth attempted to achieve his objectives. Both the early and later philosophy contend with a metadilemma, Hume's metaphilosophical dilemma. *Romans II* is best understood if it is assimilated into the tradition of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* represented by key figures of "Wittgenstein's Vienna" - Karl Kraus, Arnold Schoenberg and Adolf Loos. Without retracting one whit the central insights of *Romans II*, *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum* and the *Church Dogmatics* recapitulate the later Wittgenstein's attack on epistemological realism, a doctrine antithetical to the resolution of the metatheological dilemma.

The thesis is divided into three parts. Part One sets out from the Enlightenment roots of Barth's theology and takes us as far as *Romans II*. It comprises two chapters. The first sets the scene for the whole of the thesis and sets out Overbeck's metatheological dilemma. Chapter 2 offers an interpretation of *Romans II* assimilated to "Wittgenstein's Vienna" in the context of the respective metatheological and metaphilosophical dilemmas. Part Two on the main covers the

later theology, principally the *Church Dogmatics*. Chapter 3 sets out an interpretation of the *Church Dogmatics* in the context of Overbeck's dilemma and *sui generis* theological truth. Continuing on from chapter 3, chapter 4 looks at the main epistemological responses to Barth's later theology, showing how much they resemble certain influential reactions to, and interpretations of, the later Wittgenstein. Part Three seeks to establish the precise nature of the ratiocinative status of Barth's *Church Dogmatics*. It comprises three chapters. Chapter 5 sets out the launching-pad for an alternative response to what it was Barth was doing epistemologically. Aided by the metanarrative of Wittgenstein's later philosophy, chapters 6 and 7 continue and complete the exposition of this alternative response, demonstrating how Barth satisfied the critical attitude of the Enlightenment, and, preserving *sui generis* theological truth to the end, executed his duty to Overbeck's metatheological dilemma to the end. Chapter 8 sets Barth's doctrine of the Holy Spirit within the context of Barth's commitment to *sui generis* theology, showing in particular that Barth repudiated a realist hermeneutic, and, as a corollary of his whole position, subordinated meaning to (*sui generis*) truth.

Part One

Chapter One

I. The Enlightenment Legacy.

To many, the assertion that the theology of Karl Barth was ultimately loyal to the Enlightenment legacy must seem *prima facie* implausible. Yet without recourse to rewriting the history of the Enlightenment but rather reaffirming the themes of *autonomy* and *criticism* as the two *leitmotifs* definitive of the period, it is possible - by taking a more historicist view - to identify Barth's theology, rather than for example Schleiermacher's, as the true heir of the Enlightenment legacy.

The legacy of Enlightenment [*Aufklärung*], that prelude to modernity as Peter Gay calls it,¹ is primarily and necessarily the inheritance bequeathed by two of its most distinctive animating forces: *autonomy* and *criticism*.

Autonomy as Kant used it primarily signalled a moral imperative:

Autonomy of the Will is a property of it by which it is a law to itself independently of any property of objects of volition.²

In the sphere of knowledge man's autonomous will must be conjoined to a similarly autonomous reason:

Enlightenment is man's release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man's inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another. Self-incurred is this tutelage when its cause lies not in lack of reason but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another. *Sapere Aude!* "Have the courage to use your own reason" - that is the moral of Enlightenment.³

But it was not only (if mainly) self-incurred tutelage with which the Enlightenment had to contend. The ethos of intellectual freedom inaugurated by the social, economic and (in the widest sense) cultural movements of the period was essentially a freedom, as Kant's discussion on the autonomy of the will implies,

¹ P Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, vol 2, (New York, Alfred A Knopf, 1969), 3-12.

² I Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, translation with an introduction by L W Beck, (New York, Bobbs-Merril, 1959), 59.

³ Kant, *What is Enlightenment?*, translation with an introduction by L W Beck, (New York, Bobbs-Merril, 1959), 85.

from external constraint. In the context of the Enlightenment such a freedom was at once: freedom from the constraints of Church authority, a temporal power that believed its interests and those of Christianity to be best served by the strict control and curtailment of enquiry insofar as this was liable to usurp the eternal truths of religion; and freedom from state authority fearful of, and intent on protecting itself against, the merest hint of social change.

While it would be an exaggeration to describe the metaphysical or philosophical systems of the seventeenth century⁴ (e.g., Descartes, Malebranche, Leibniz) as inert or static systems, it is true to say that they were not essentially critical tools determined on confrontation with traditional beliefs. Thus had they been in fact irreconcilable with the teachings of the Church, such intellectual autonomy therein contained could have without discrepancy lain concealed from both author and authority. This afforded Descartes, for example, the relief from Church persecution he sought:

To be sure, Descartes never tires of assuring us that his innovation is concerned solely with knowledge and not belief; in every matter of theological dogma he expressly declares his submission to the authority of Scripture and the Church.⁵

Nevertheless, as Cassirer acknowledges, Descartes could not avoid being a forerunner of the Enlightenment proper, avoid being modern. The dogma of the inerrancy of the Bible, for example could only "be upheld with difficulty in the light of the progress of philosophical thought. For the Cartesian method of doubt cannot stop at this point."⁶

In the Age of the Enlightenment, reason no longer desired to hide itself. Indeed there is no greater testimony to this fact than that Kant goes so far as to ground the unavoidably public sphere of human morality in reason. But now the

⁴ E Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1951), 6-7.

⁵ *Ibid*, 184.

⁶ *Ibid*, 184. It is clear that Descartes' attempted harmonisation of the spheres of knowledge and belief anticipates the route Kant took to reconcile knowledge and faith in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. This is one more reason why Descartes can be said to be a pioneer of the Enlightenment.

nature of reason became such that this was no longer an option: reason could no longer hide itself. In other words, reason was no longer an objectified form, no longer objectified (as in Leibniz's monads) in system or structure; it was rather more akin to a kinetic *process* whose existence, though inferred, was plainly manifest in the change it brought about:

The whole eighteenth century understands reason in this sense; not as a sound body of knowledge, principles and truths, but as a kind of energy, a *force* [my italics] which is fully comprehensible only in its agency and effects. What reason is, and what it can do, can never be known by its results but only by its function.⁷

Moreover, since reason is an operative force (it is, Lessing said, not found in the possession of truth but rather in the search for truth), it was inevitable that autonomous reason came to be embodied in *critical reason*. Reason as a force is a critical tool: it subjects everything without exception to *criticism* and analytically measures and dissects every object under its gaze, so to speak. Hence, the Age of Enlightenment, the Age of Philosophy, is also the Age of Criticism. As Cassirer expresses it, the Age of Philosophy and the Age of Criticism are "different expressions of the same situation, intended to characterise from diverse angles the fundamental intellectual energy which permeates the era unto which it owes its great trends of thought."⁸

II. Other *Leitmotifs*?

The above is patently not intended as an exhaustive survey of each and every phenomenon of the Enlightenment; rather it is an attempt to say how the Enlightenment, in the broadest sense of the term, hangs together in the broadest sense of the term.⁹ It is submitted that the movement reduces to the two phenomena of autonomy and criticism. While other phenomena are not accidental or chance occurrences, and though historically the Enlightenment was as it was, it is submitted

⁷ *Ibid*, 13.

⁸ *Ibid*, 275.

⁹ Philosophy as Thomas Nagel put it "is how things in the broadest sense of the term hang together in the broadest sense of the term." Cassirer's book *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* is the classic example of such a dictum put into practice.

that the movement could have been otherwise with respect to such phenomena and still have been the Enlightenment. In other words, such phenomena are not intrinsic or essential to the identity of the Enlightenment. Not so with autonomy and criticism: without them the Enlightenment is no longer the Enlightenment. Hence, they survive a more *historicist* view of the legacy.

However, the two principles may beg a number of important questions if there are other equally important, which is to say, fundamental and independent principles essential to the identity of the legacy. Robert Jenson declares that Barth stands in a "clear and by no means undialectically antagonistic relation to [three] motif[s] of the Enlightenment"¹⁰ Two of the three motifs correspond to autonomy and criticism: the first, for which Jenson takes recourse to Barth himself, is embodied in the concept of autonomous man: "the emergence of a specific sort of 'Mensch' of human person, the 'absolutist' human person;¹¹ the second is 'critique'¹² which can without more ado be assimilated to the principle of criticism. The question whether the third motif of 'mechanism' is an additional fundamental and therefore irreducibly independent principle is rather more pressing. Clearly as Jenson himself implicitly acknowledges,¹³ only by a stretch of the imagination can Barth's theology be called "mechanistic". Yet, that Barth stands in a "dialectically antagonistic" relation to the Enlightenment is in fact another means of affirmation of the thesis that Barth's relation is to the identity of the Enlightenment and not to the historical Enlightenment *per se*. While it cannot be gainsaid that "mechanism" was one of the distinctive phenomena of the period,¹⁴ and thereafter became perhaps the prevailing world-view among scientists in the nineteenth century (especially the second half), it is essential to distinguish between, on the one hand,

¹⁰ R Jenson, "Karl Barth", in D F Ford (ed), *The Modern Theologians. An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, vol 1, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1989), 25.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 25-26.

¹² *Ibid*, 26-27.

¹³ *Ibid*, 28.

¹⁴ See I Berlin, *The Age of Enlightenment: the Eighteenth Century Philosophers* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1979), 18-26.

a methodology and, on the other, the doctrines proved or justified on the application of that methodology. In other words, regardless of whether it was construed as an essential attribute of Enlightenment methodology, mechanism was - and is - a contingent substantive scientific thesis whose truth may or may not have been disproved or falsified by criticism. Indeed, that it has subsequently been rendered obsolete is due to no other force than that of criticism. This explains among other things why such unashamed Enlightenment thinkers as present-day critical rationalists, (of whom Sir Karl Popper is perhaps the most eminent example) jettison mechanism in favour of an essentially indeterministically conceived quantum mechanics. Far from doing away with the Enlightenment, rational criticism is an essential attribute of the Enlightenment. What it did do away with is the older world-view of mechanism. In other words, mechanism is subordinate to autonomy and criticism, which is to say, it is not an essential attribute of the Enlightenment legacy. Hence that Barth cannot be described as a "mechanist" is irrelevant to the thesis here being propounded.

One may also say the same about another motif often taken to be a defining feature of the Enlightenment: dualism.¹⁵ T F Torrance is the leading proponent of the view that Barth's theology culminates in an essentially anti-dualistic theology:

The main difficulty people have with Karl Barth arises as they try to understand him within the dualist frame of thought that has prevailed since the Age of the Enlightenment, whereas Barth's thought has moved far beyond that.¹⁶

Again:

[Fundamentalist and liberals alike] resented his findings that they have both succumbed, although in different ways, to the rationalistic dualism of the Enlightenment, either to a corpus of logical propositions deduced from statements in the Holy Scriptures, or to patterns of ideas derived from historico-critical analysis of the religious consciousness reflected in the Holy Scriptures¹⁷

Since Barth is radically anti-dualistic, so the argument goes, and dualism is a defining property of the Enlightenment the thesis that Barth enters into the

¹⁵ See C Gunton, "Article Review. David Ford: Barth and God's Story." *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol. 37, 1984, 375-376.

¹⁶ T F Torrance, *Karl Barth: Biblical and Evangelical Theologian* (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1990), ix.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 163; see also 162, 167.

Enlightenment legacy must be rejected (dualism is an defining feature of the legacy). Yet, like mechanism, dualism is not a necessary feature of the Enlightenment. An Enlightenment without dualism is conceivable. Again, it is crucial to distinguish between methodology and substantive doctrine. Like mechanism, dualism is a contingent thesis that may or may not be true and may or may not be disproved or falsified by criticism. It too is subordinate to the principle of criticism. Moreover, Torrance asserts dualism appears on the historical scene whenever there is "a deistic breach between the being of God and the world he has created, while its abstraction from God's activity in the world serves to harden the breach."¹⁸ Various kinds of dualism have been in existence prior to the historical Enlightenment: Gnostic dualism, Augustinian dualism, Augustinian-Aristotelian dualism and Lutheran dualism. Hence dualism cannot be a sufficient condition of the Enlightenment. But neither is it a necessary condition since it is historically possible for the Enlightenment and the Enlightenment legacy respectively to have avoided, and avoid, dualism. Hence again as in the case of mechanism, that Barth cannot be described as a dualist is irrelevant to the thesis here being propounded.

III. Kant's Response to Hume's Metaphilosophical Dilemma.

But not only is there nothing thus far about the Enlightenment that patently precludes Barth from being theological heir to its legacy, the definitive parameters of the problematic which Barth's theology made its own, the underlying historical dynamic without which the identity of Barth's theology remains hidden, have no historical precedent other than the later stages of the Enlightenment and Hume and Kant. Indeed though it was Hume who inadvertently or otherwise¹⁹ posed the problematic, it was not until Kant that the Enlightenment became truly self-conscious, which is to say, came face to face with the truly 'modern' predicament

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 154.

¹⁹ G J Warnock writes: "[Kant] held that when [Hume] stated it, Hume had simply not realized the extent of the havoc that its acceptance would occasion." See G J Warnock, "Kant", in D J O'Connor (ed), *A Critical History of Western Philosophy* (New York, The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), 299.

of metaphilosophical and metatheological dilemma.²⁰

Some years before Kant's declaration of *Sapere Audere!* Hume had stated the case for the forces of reason somewhat more dramatically. However the concluding paragraph of his *Enquiries concerning Human Understanding* had been intended to be read, it was subsequently interpreted as a clarion call for all Enlightened thinkers to unleash the forces of reason on dogmatism wherever it existed:

When we run over libraries, persuaded of these principles, what havoc must we make? If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, *Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number?* No. *Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact or existence?* No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.²¹

Hume's justly celebrated classification of two types of truth, between on the one hand relations of ideas and, on the other, matters of fact - "Hume's fork" - is what Kant speaks of when crediting Hume with waking him from his "dogmatic

²⁰ Although the etymology of the word 'metaphysics' involves the meaning 'after' (Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, and hence later its subject, was so-called because it followed the *Physics*), the usual meaning of 'meta' is 'about' as in 'meta-ethics', 'metahistory', and 'metalanguage'. Accordingly, where (Christian) theology is 'about' God, Jesus Christ, etc., (which constitute the 'objects' of theology), 'metatheological' is 'about' theology (i.e., theology itself constitutes the object of metatheological discourse); exactly the same distinction holds in the case of 'metaphilosophical': metaphilosophy is about philosophy, which in turn is 'about': mind, rationality, etc. Thus, for example, where philosophy might enquire into the existence of mind, metaphilosophy would enquire into the existence of philosophy itself. Accordingly, if it were demonstrated that philosophy did not exist then the question of the existence of mind would not be a philosophical question though it might well be a scientific (psychological or physiological) one. Similarly, if theology did not exist then questions related to the nature and existence of God would not be theological though it might be appropriate for science to study them.

²¹ D Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding and concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. by P H Nidditch, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1975), 165. That Hume's indictment should have cut at the very heart of theology ("divinity") is obviously of momentous importance. But for the moment I will focus on his reaction to "school metaphysics" only, since it is the consequence of "Hume's fork" for philosophy that concerns us here. A J Ayer cited "Hume's fork" as the basis for the position he took in *Language, Truth and Logic*, the Anglo-Saxon manifesto for logical positivism. A J Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, revised edition, (London, Victor Gollancz, 1946), 2. Stroud points out the difference between Ayer's logical positivism and Humean empiricism. Where Ayer condemns all theological statements to the realm of semantic meaninglessness, Hume concludes that they are not appropriate topics for reasoning. See B Stroud, *Hume*, (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 220. For a history of positivism from Hume to the logical positivists, see L Kolakowski, *Positivist Philosophy. From Hume to the Vienna Circle* (Middlesex, Penguin Books Ltd, 1972).

slumber".²² Kant had believed that philosophy was the one truly autonomous subject, subject only to the dictates of reason, because unlike the faculties of theology, law and medicine, it was free from the meddling of authority. But now, ironically, as a consequence of Hume's peerless example of criticism in action, philosophy as the very embodiment of reason had appeared to have done away with itself.

For Kant saw that if Hume's fork was an exhaustive and mutually exclusive scheme for the classification of truth and truths, no space was left for philosophy. Analytic truths aside (truths which were simply true by definition), all that was left were the truths of history, geography, astronomy, politics, natural philosophy, physics, chemistry etc. In other words, if all substantive truths were *a posteriori* truths then the realm of truth was completely accounted for in terms of non-philosophy; there simply were no truths that philosophy could claim as its own. In other words, Hume had announced the end of philosophy as an autonomous subject. Every truth formerly cited as an example of philosophy was in actual fact either meaningless,²³ or a function of, and hence reducible to, a truth of non-philosophy, (natural philosophy, physics, chemistry, history, etc.).

Kant's resolution of the dilemma posed by Hume for philosophy was to add to Hume's truths of matters of fact and existence what for him was the patent existence of *a priori* synthetic truths.²⁴ As Körner puts it he "does not accept the Humean dichotomy of meaningful propositions because he believes that as a matter of fact we are 'in possession of' propositions which fall into neither of Hume's two classes; they form a third class whose logical nature, function, and systematic connexion, with each other and with other types of proposition is the main topic of

²² Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, translated by P G Lucas, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1953), 9. A Flew points out that though such a distinction is present in Leibniz, Hume is the philosopher who made its epistemological implications clear to Kant. See A Flew, *David Hume: Philosopher of Moral Science* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1986), 45.

²³ Flew writes that one of the items of "divinity and school metaphysics" that Hume must have had in mind was the 'Arguments the existence of God' drawn up in geometric fashion, which Descartes had appended to the set of objections to his meditations. *Ibid*, 69-70.

²⁴ Warnock, "Kant", 299.

his own philosophy."²⁵ Hume's bipartite classification becomes a tripartite classification. This third class is in fact a second sub-class of the class of Hume's truths of matters of fact and existence. Not all synthetic truths are *a posteriori*, some are *a priori*. Therefore while Kant accepts Hume's general concept of truth, he augments this general class of truths to include truths that while known *a priori* (before experience) were yet synthetic (truths whose negation was not a contradiction in terms) and accordingly informative about the world.

Accordingly, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, philosophy resecured its own special identity by recasting itself as a *transcendental* science specifying the conditions of the possibility of all experience. Such conditions constituted both a framework and a boundary within which empirical truth was apprehended. Thus the *a priori* synthetic principle 'Every event has a cause' specified both a framework and a boundary within which empirical science established its truths. Philosophy was in that sense restored to its rightful place as queen of all the sciences.

Philosophy was no longer threatened with redundancy and extinction; on the contrary, Kant had apparently imbued it with a new life of its own such that philosophy is once more philosophy in its own right.

IV. Theology in the Wake of Kant (Schleiermacher).

Historically, the theological response to the metatheological dilemma is not to Hume but to Kant. Kant's critical philosophy not only made room for itself, it made room for faith: "I have found it necessary to deny knowledge, in order to make room for faith [*Glaube*]."²⁶

In Kant, faith is located firmly in the moral sphere, a consequence of the moral postulate of practical reason, the product of the will of a rational being.²⁷ In other words the limits imposed by the dictates of reason on theoretical reason create

²⁵ S Körner, *Kant* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1955), 18.

²⁶ Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by N Kemp Smith, (London, MacMillan, 1933), 29.

²⁷ A W Wood, *Kant's Rational Theology* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1978), 15-24.

a space for faith whose rational justification, whose theology, so to speak, is provided by practical reason.²⁸

Nineteenth century theologians affirmed a different presence from Kant. A turn to *Gefühl* [feeling] was the most widely followed. This was the route taken by Schleiermacher.²⁹ Schleiermacher agreed with Kant that "God cannot appear in a concept of judgement (*Begriff* or *Urteil*). That sort of objectification is epistemologically inaccurate."³⁰ But he rejected Kant's deduction that faith in God and immortality was if rational necessarily moral. Instead of treating God in abstract moral terms, Schleiermacher located religion in the realm of feeling or immediate self-consciousness converging on a consciousness of "ourselves as utterly dependent [*schlechthin abhängig*] or which is to say the same thing, as being in relation to God."³¹ Indeed insofar as he opposed the reduction of religion and theology into the intellectualistic or moralistic categories favoured by the Enlightenment and instead counterposed the Romantic categories of feeling and intuition,³² Schleiermacher may be said to have attempted to reassert the *sui generis* identity of religion. Claude Welch comments:

It is frequently said that the great achievement of Schleiermacher, his creative

²⁸ Hence Kant's *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* refers to religion within the limits of practical reason.

²⁹ Sources for my analysis of Schleiermacher are: F Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches for the Cultured Despisers of Religion* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988); *The Christian Faith* (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1928); C Welch, *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, vol 1, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1972-85); B Gerrish, *A Prince of the Church, Schleiermacher and the Beginnings of Modern Theology* (London, SCM, 1984); *Tradition and the Modern World: Reformed Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1978); K Clement, *Schleiermacher, Pioneer of Modern Theology* (London, Collins, 1987).

³⁰ Welch, *Protestant Thought*, 77. Schleiermacher, taking his lead from Kant, denies the possibility of the epistemological project embodied in the classical proofs of the existence of God. However, that does not make Schleiermacher any less a realist than it does Kant. Gerrish raises objections to the thesis that Schleiermacher was a panentheist. See Gerrish, *A Prince of the Church*, 52.

³¹ Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 12.

³² For Schleiermacher's relation to the Romantic spirit of the first decade of the nineteenth century see R F Streetman, "Romanticism and the *Sensus Numinus* in Schleiermacher", in D Jasper (ed.) *The Interpretation of Belief; Coleridge, Schleiermacher and Romanticism*, (London, MacMillan, 1986), 104-125.

breakthrough was his fresh interpretation of religion in its own integrity, according to its fundamental institution and its locus in feeling or in the immediacy of human existence, whereby the traditionalist-orthodox debate was wholly undercut and a new possibility for understanding religion was opened. This is correct.³³

But is it sufficient to safeguard the autonomy of religion and more especially the autonomy of theology, which latter Schleiermacher defines as reflection on religious feeling? Theology is emancipated from philosophy only to dissolve into psychology, anthropology and (eventually) sociology or even physiology.

1. Schleiermacher "enlarges the category of direct experience"³⁴ to include religious self-consciousness. To be sure, he does not say that piety is "a special kind of feeling, but that feeling designates the place in which religion is to be found."³⁵ But neither does it follow that religion can exist apart from knowing and doing as phenomenological states.³⁶

2. To be sure, *Gefühl* is not a faculty parallel to the faculty thinking and willing. But though it is located at a different level from knowing and willing, it is not separate from them.

3. Moreover, though the feeling of utter dependence belongs to a higher level of self-consciousness "in which the antithesis between self and other disappears" and therefore in that sense is to be distinguished from knowing and willing (which belong to the "sensuous" and therefore middle level of self-consciousness),³⁷ it is still the case that Schleiermacher speaks of phenomenological phenomena and therefore phenomena accessible to psychological and anthropological study.³⁸

4. When Schleiermacher makes a transition from feeling to intellect, from

³³ Welch, *Protestant Thought*, vol 1, 68.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 48.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 66.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 67.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 66.

³⁸ See for example W Pannenberg, *Anthropology in a Theological Perspective*, translated by M J O'Connell, (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1985), 250-254. Even though Pannenberg is aware of Schleiermacher's view of the irreducibility of the religious affections, man's primordial religiosity, etc., nonetheless he believes they are susceptible of anthropological (and psychological) investigation.

religion to theology, the vulnerability of theology's autonomy becomes even more apparent. Schleiermacher defined theology as follows: "Christian doctrines are accounts of the Christian religious affections set forth in speech."³⁹ The advantage of giving theology an exclusively experiential grounding was that it "freed theology for the full acceptance of historical critical investigation of Scripture. Hence Schleiermacher's statement was to be the archetype for nearly all the later liberal theologies."⁴⁰ The disadvantage was that theology's intellectual relations with other disciplines became undeniably apologetic. It has been said that Schleiermacher "wanted in all circumstances to be modern man as well as Christian theologian."⁴¹ The emphasis must be on "in all circumstances", which is to say inclusive of all circumstances in which one did theology. At such times Schleiermacher "determined on no account to interpret Christianity in such a way that his interpreted statements can come into conflict with the methods and principles of the philosophy and the historical and scientific research of his time."⁴² Hence though the "final independence and integrity of religion and theology must be defended", such independence "could not mean unrelatedness to *Wissenschaft*", to the "whole range of scholarship and organised knowledge."⁴³

The realm of theology in effect became circumscribed in a highly conscious fashion and theology became a function of non-theology, principally historicism and psychologism. Though Schleiermacher sought to establish the independence and integrity of religion and theology, it is not enough that he affirms theology's freedom from the heteronomy of historical cultural forces, he also has to affirm its freedom from the heteronomous forces of other disciplines. Theology is not yet *sui generis* and in that sense has not truly entered into its Enlightenment legacy.

³⁹ Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 76.

⁴⁰ Welch, *Protestant Thought*, vol 1, 85.

⁴¹ Barth, *Nineteenth Century Protestant Theology. Its Background and History*, translated by B Cozen and J Bowden, (London, SCM Press, 1972), 433.

⁴² *Ibid*, 445.

⁴³ Welch, *Protestant Thought*, vol 1, 63.

Indeed, with hindsight it is easy to see how difficult it was to satisfy the Kantian framework and at the same time attempt to fill the space allocated for faith with something other than the Kantian moral postulate. However unintentionally, such a move always ran the risk of ending up doing non-theology within the realm governed by the *a priori* synthetic categories (the realm of non-theology).

Yet, even though Kant himself can be said to have saved faith and therefore theology from reduction to the other emerging social sciences of psychology, anthropology and sociology, his theology is strictly a first-order function of philosophy. Hence, adhering to Kant's scheme is not a sufficient condition of safeguarding the autonomy of theology. Moreover, it is due to Barth that we can see it is not a necessary condition either.

V. Barth's Response to Hume's (Overbeck's) Metatheological Dilemma.

While Barth does not dispute, and indeed is a proponent of, the *historical* thesis that Schleiermacher was the principal theological *Endstation* of the Enlightenment, he sets himself against the view that Schleiermacher is the *inevitable* legatee of the Enlightenment:

Positively or negatively we can draw lines from everywhere leading to Schleiermacher, from every point we can come to understand that for his century he was not only one among many others, with his theology and philosophy of religion, but that it was possible for him to have the significance of the fullness of time. I do not say it was inevitable but possible. Whether the century understood itself rightly in thinking it heard the liberating world from Schleiermacher, whether it might not have been possible to gain further insights of an entirely different kind from all the points which Schleiermacher had touched upon - that is a different question.⁴⁴

It is not the Enlightenment legacy *per se* that Barth is against but rather the particular historical twist Schleiermacher gives it.⁴⁵ Schleiermacher not the

⁴⁴ Barth, *Protestant Theology*, 427-428.

⁴⁵ Another example of Barth taking a more historicist view of the Enlightenment is the following: "Despite the great stress that has been placed on the significance of the change in the picture of the world and the rise of scientific and mathematical thought, it should not be over-estimated here: a man like Leibnitz, who occupies so exalted a place in modern intellectual history and who incorporates its results so consistently into his system, shows that it is quite possible to know everything that could be known of philosophy and science at the time without the necessity of taking the offensive even against dogma, let alone the Bible. He was able to

Enlightenment is Barth's alter-ego.

Moreover, it does not strain the bounds of credulity to suggest that, however faintly, Barth hints that he himself is the true legatee of the Enlightenment. Can we take him seriously? (Can we amplify Barth's faint hint into an assertion worthy of serious consideration?)⁴⁶

Claude Welch categorises Barth as one more major theological reaction, and in this sense, variation on Kant:

Kant ... is above all the philosopher with whom the nineteenth century theologians had to reckon. After him, four possible routes may be distinguished, all of which were travelled to a greater or lesser extent. One was to question the validity of the first critique's restriction of theoretical knowledge or cognition, either (as in the idealistic philosophy) by "more consistently" and "courageously" following out Kant's speculative principle and overcoming the phenomenal-noumenal "dualism" or by some revised program of natural theology that would take account of Kant's work (e.g. in more recent neo-Thomism). The second, a minor stream in the

struggle in his own way to combine the traditional church doctrine of the Trinity and even the specifically Protestant dogmas of predestination and justification within his theory of monads and of preestablished harmony. Things did not *necessarily* (from that point at any rate) have to come out differently. That they did come out differently was only a matter of fact, or rather, was governed by a necessity which had its grounds elsewhere." *Ibid*, 102.

Indeed, it is striking that when speaking of Enlightenment reason, Barth is never anything other than complementary. As if calling into question the rival interpretations of rationalist and traditional Barthian alike, Barth begins chapter 3 of *Dogmatics in Outline* with a statement that is eminently Enlightenment philosophy:

"Possibly you may be struck by the emergence of the concept of reason. I use it deliberately. The saying "Despise only reason and science, man's supremest power of all", was uttered not by a prophet, but by Goethe's Mephisto. Christendom and the theological world were always ill-advised in thinking it their duty for some reason or other, either of enthusiasm or of theological conception, to betake themselves to the camp of an opposition to reason." Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, translated by G T Thomson, (London, SCM Press, 1949), 22.

⁴⁶ Trutz Rendorff has advanced the thesis that the historical significance of Barth consists in his positing the radical autonomy of God. According to Rendorff this is how Barth satisfies the Enlightenment principle. As J Macken puts it, according to Rendorff:

"The Enlightenment with its principle of autonomy, must be radically adopted or not at all. Barth chose to adopt the principle of autonomy in a radical sense, but instead of accommodating himself to the historical event of the Enlightenment, as liberal theology had done, he presented the principle of autonomy in a new systematic construction as a challenge at every point to the accepted self-understanding of the Enlightenment. What Barth represented was a new Enlightenment that turned on the Enlightenment itself the same critical weaponry which the Enlightenment had formerly used against religion. He replaced the freedom and autonomy of man with the freedom and autonomy of God." J Macken S.J., *The Autonomy Theme in the Church Dogmatics. Karl Barth and his Critics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), 125.

nineteenth century which was renewed in the twentieth by Karl Barth, was the acceptance of reason's criticism of its limits and thereby the denial of reason's right to establish the point of departure for theology. [...] The third, which was to be taken up most dramatically in the Ritschlian school, was the full acceptance of the Kantian critique of theoretical reason and adoption of the moral as the basis of proceeding. The fourth, by far the most widely followed, was to enlarge the category of direct experience by turning to *Gefühl* (Schleiermacher), *Abhang* (De Witte), or by finding in a fuller "reason" the possibility of knowing the spiritual (Coleridge). In all these ways however there was reflected a Socratic turn to the role of the subject, in faith and knowledge, a turn which had its epistemological expression in Kant's analysis in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.⁴⁷

But not only is it a mistake to assimilate Barth to Kierkegaard in this way (the preeminent example of the "minor stream in the nineteenth century"), there is yet a deeper fault with this analysis, one which ironically serves to obfuscate the real significance of Kant for Barth. Had Barth's theology really participated in the turn to the subject prevalent at the time, it could not have escaped being a function of philosophy (and hence a second-order response to Hume). But where in Kant theology is a second-order function of Hume's problematic, and hence a (first-order) function of philosophy,⁴⁸ Barth's theology, like Kant's philosophy itself, is a *direct first-order* response to Hume.

Accordingly, Barth's theology, unlike Schleiermacher's, is not a turn to the subject at all. Kant's faith (belief)-knowledge demarcation is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of the *sui generis* identity of theology.⁴⁹ It makes a qualitatively different response. Instead Barth, in making a first-order response, seeks, again like Kant, to deal with Hume's dilemma at the first-order level of *truth*.

Historically, of course Barth did not, as Kant did, deal with Hume directly

⁴⁷ Welch, *Protestant Thought*, 47-48.

⁴⁸ Thus Kant's rational theology is in the precise sense of the term a *philosophical* theology, i.e., theology as a function of philosophy. See Wood, *Kant's Rational Theology*.

⁴⁹ Barth readily agreed with Kant that the "Biblical theologian proves that God exists by means of the fact that he has spoken in the Bible." See Barth, *Protestant Theology*, 312. But Kant's philosophical scheme implicitly allows for the possibility that the resultant theology can be theology as a function of philosophy. Therefore it is not a sufficient condition of the autonomy of theology. But neither is it a necessary condition. In other words, *pace* Welch, it does not follow that Barth's theology accepted "reason's criticism of its limits" and "*thereby* [my italics] the denial of reason's right to establish the point of departure for theology." See Welch, *Protestant Theology*, 47. Whether Barth accepted the former or not was independent of the implicit affirmation in his work of the latter. That is, he could accept the antecedent without *deriving* the consequent (which latter he could implicitly affirm on other grounds).

(Barth's is an indirect direct first-order response); rather it was in the form and figure of Franz Overbeck (1837-1905) that Barth encountered Hume.

Overbeck's reputation in Basel was as Hume's had been in Edinburgh - that of a dissenter from, and despoiler of, mainstream opinion on Christianity. It is surely no historical accident that both Overbeck and Hume were in their respective life-times castigated, even reviled, as objects of anxiety, fear and trepidation for exercising the most trenchant and iconoclastic criticism of religion. Overbeck the learned historian and scholar was "the diagnostician of the end of Christianity, not a proclaimer like his friend Nietzsche."⁵⁰ But though in Basel "the mere mention of Overbeck's name was enough to make everyone's hair stand on end",⁵¹ Overbeck was treated somewhat less prejudicially than Hume in that where Hume was twice denied a university chair (in philosophy) for his "atheistic" or "aggressively agnostic" views, Overbeck, though perceived as an *enfant terrible*, became Professor of Church History at the University of Basel.

Though Overbeck was separated from Hume by more than a century, Overbeck pushed the metatheological dilemma implicit in Hume to its explicit logical conclusion.

For once again, just as in the case of philosophy, if Hume was right, theology was in actual fact a function of, and hence reducible to, non-theology. The domain of Hume's truths of matter of fact and existence is constituted by reasonings concerning either *particular* or *general facts*:

Moral reasonings are either concerning particular or general facts. All deliberations regard the former, as are disquisitions of history, chronology, geography and astronomy.

The sciences, which treat general facts, are comprised of politics, natural philosophy, physic, chemistry, &c

Divinity or Theology as it proves the existence of a Deity and the immortality of souls, is composed partly of reasons concerning particular, partly concerning general facts.⁵²

⁵⁰ E Jüngel, *Karl Barth. A Theological Legacy*, translated by G Paul, (Pennsylvania, Westminster Press, 1986), 56.

⁵¹ E Busch, *His Life From Letters and Autobiographical Texts*, translated by J Bowden, (London, SCM Press, 1976), 115.

⁵² Hume, *Enquiries*, 164-5.

But though Hume goes on to reaffirm that theology "has a foundation in reason",⁵³ he quickly inserts the qualification that this is "so far as it is supported by experience."⁵⁴ It is clear he thinks it is *not* supported by experience, hence not by reason either. Thus in order to restore the situation and appease conventional religious sensibility⁵⁵ he (perhaps even more quickly than before) adds: "But its best and most solid foundation is *faith* and divine revelation."⁵⁶

But even had Hume been more positive, even had he answered the question of the existence of a Deity in the affirmative, theology would still have dissolved in the process. In other words, Hume had dispatched and dispersed theology

⁵³ *Ibid*, 165.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 165. "All our reasonings concerning matters of fact are founded on a species of Analogy, which lead us to expect from any cause the same events, which we have observed from similar causes." (*Ibid*, 104) For Hume reasoning is either experimental and therefore what we would call inductive reasoning, or abstract reasoning and therefore what we would call deductive reasoning. Given constant conjunction - for Hume the basis of science - is the basis of experimental reasoning, insofar as revelatory theology was based on a non-replicable event, it was not a suitable subject of reason. Thus according to Flew: "Theology was even prepared to concede a little to natural science, if in exchange it could be assured the mark of scientific method." See Flew, *David Hume*, 16. Hendel writes: "He [Hume] wants to evaluate natural theology according to the criterion of natural science." See C W Hendel, *Studies in the Philosophy of David Hume* (New York, Bobbs-Merrill, 1963), 267.

⁵⁵ According to N Kemp Smith, Hume, as in the *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, makes mention of, but certainly does not take refuge in, "revealed truth" as a "conventionally required proviso". N Kemp Smith (ed), *Hume's Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 2nd ed., ed. with an introduction by Kemp Smith, (New York Social Science Publishers, 1948, 74. Nor does he make "the conventionally required concessions in regard to faith and revelation." *Ibid*, 63. Similarly, Hume appears to have second thoughts on the rationality of revealed religion at the close of Section X 'Of Miracles' in the *Enquiry*. See Hume, *Enquiries*, 131. A E Taylor describes this as a "volte-face". See A E Taylor, *Philosophical Studies* (London, MacMillan, 1934), 341. Flew describes it as "blisteringly sardonic". See Flew, *Hume's Philosophy of Belief: a study of his first 'Inquiry'* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), 210.

⁵⁶ Hume, *Enquiries*, 165. According to Flew the most powerful case in Hume's day for the existence of God was developed in two stages: (1) arguments of natural reason supplemented by (2) particular revelation constituting sufficient historical evidence to prove the constitutive and enduring miracles of Christianity. See Flew, *David Hume*, 61-62. Flew writes: "Hume is engaged in a question of evidence rather than a question of fact. What he means to establish is not that miracles do not occur, although he does make it plain that this was his own view as well as that of all other men of sense; but that, whether or not they did or did not occur, this is not something we can any of us ever be in a position to know." *Ibid*, 80. But for Hume not only is it something we are not in a position to know, it is something we are not in a position to reason about. In other words, given Hume's definition of experimental reasoning as constant conjunction, miracles are not an appropriate subject of rational discourse. That a miracle has occurred is a question for faith since the former is a particular fact one cannot reason about.

throughout the domain of non-theology, assimilating it here as natural science, there as history or anthropology. In other words, to echo what was said of philosophy: theology was no longer an autonomous subject; every truth formerly cited as an example of theology was in actual fact either meaningless, or a function of, and hence reducible to, a truth of non-theology (natural philosophy, physics, history, anthropology, etc.); there simply were no truths that theology could claim as its own. One either did non-theology or nothing.

Overbeck, like Hume, is a trenchant and radical critic of Christianity but it is as an inspired metatheological critic rather than a sceptic that he accordingly inspires Barth.⁵⁷

Barth's essay on Overbeck, "Unsettled Questions for Theology Today", is in fact a review of Overbeck's work posthumously published under the title "Christianity and Culture". This work he judged to be

an inconceivably impressive sharpening of the commandment 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.' If it is read and understood, the normal effect would be that ninety-nine percent of us ... will make the discovery that it is impossible for anyone really to be such a thing as a theologian.⁵⁸

According to Barth, Overbeck's great virtue is that he questioned the continued existence of theology. Though for Overbeck the burning issue revolves

⁵⁷ Barth writes that Overbeck "stands just on the boundary between" "sceptic" and "inspired critic". "And one side of his nature (if one can speak of two sides) will be comprehensible through the other." Barth, "Unsettled Questions in Theology Today", in Karl Barth, *Theology and Church*, with an introduction by Torrance, translated by L Pettibone Smith, (London, SCM Press Ltd, 1962), 58. Jüngel, quoting Overbeck, also reads his critique of Christianity and the Christian-ness of theology as indicative of a metatheological dilemma: "an eschatological faith cannot tolerate any theology; on the other hand, 'theology insofar as it is a scholarly discipline, does not itself possess any proper principles of knowledge.' And since theology can no longer dictate to other disciplines as it did in the Middle Ages, it must derive from them, so that 'even the delusion that [theology] is Christian is no longer possible.' 'Theology can demonstrate that it is an academic discipline only by selling out completely.' See Jüngel, *Karl Barth*, 57. Unfortunately, "modern theology does not see through its self-deception. It does not recognise its own 'unhappy, hybrid, internally fragmented nature' and 'does not comprehend the confusion in which it is entangled.' According to Overbeck, this is its essential characteristic. He knows how distant he is from it, because he can see through it and recognized its essential inability to be a Christian theology." *Ibid*, 58.

⁵⁸ Barth, "Unsettled Questions for Theology Today", 57. Commenting on Barth's judgement, Jüngel writes: "Indeed, this was already evident in the polemical essay that Overbeck did publish during his lifetime. And Barth was also amazed 'that the theology that is dominant today could ... remain so indifferent to and untroubled by the questions he [Overbeck] put to it.'" Jüngel, *Karl Barth*, 59.

round the Christian-ness and hence religiousness of theology,⁵⁹ for Barth this signifies no less than the fate of theology itself: "How radically Overbeck questions the possibility of theology dominant today (and for him that meant questioning its *Christian-ness*, and with what earnestness he renounced it Theology still owes the answer to the inquiry made to it in 1873 [in Overbeck's essay "The Christian-ness of modern theology"])."⁶⁰ Barth himself was under no illusion as to the answer: in its present condition theology was "now in a house built on sand."⁶¹

Overbeck claimed with some justification to be the only theologian of his generation who had looked into the mirror and faced reality.⁶² Such veridical self-perception coupled to honest self-understanding consisted in the fact that when theology had looked in the mirror it had not recognised itself; for what had stared back at it was history, anthropology, etc.⁶³ In other words, Overbeck perceived that if there was no alternative to what his theological peers were doing, there was no

⁵⁹ Jüngel too sees Overbeck's critique of theology this way. Quoting Overbeck, he writes: "'As long as a religion is alive among us, everything connected with it is taken for granted, and it is not defended, because it needs no defence. As soon as it moves out into our culture, however, it dies as a religion and must draw its life from the vitality of the culture.' But theology belongs to culture insofar as it wishes to be scholarly 'Therefore every theology, insofar as it relates faith to knowledge, is itself irreligious.'" *Ibid*, 57.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 71.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 57.

⁶² Jüngel observes: "His claim to be the only one who has realised this makes his remarks seem pointed and bold." See Jüngel, *Ibid*, 58. And Barth asks: "Why did no one listen to Overbeck?" See Barth, "Unsettled Questions for Theology Today", 56.

⁶³ Barth's interest in and positive appraisal of, Ludwig Feuerbach, is likewise explained by this theme of the autonomy of theology and the implied tension *vis-à-vis* non-theology. According to Barth, Feuerbach plays an identical role to Overbeck in the history of theology on the grounds that where Overbeck derived the non-existence of theology from the perspective of history, especially church history, Feuerbach derived the formally equivalent result from the perspective of anthropology. Theology is a function of anthropology, is therefore a function of non-theology. See Barth, "Introductory Essay", translated by J L Adams, in L Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* (New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1957), x-xxxii. Barth especially singles out the liberal theology originating in Schleiermacher as an appropriate target for Feuerbach's critique. *Ibid*, xxii. Barth offered a similar appraisal of the significance of Feuerbach in his history of nineteenth-century Protestant theology. See Barth, *Protestant Theology*, 534-540. Notwithstanding the fact that Nietzsche is often bracketed with Overbeck (see for example Jenson, "Karl Barth", 28), Barth's lesser appreciation of the former is surely due to the fact that unlike Overbeck, he has nothing substantial to say about the metatheological dilemma. Nietzsche as Jüngel puts it is simply a proclaimer not a diagnostician of the end of Christianity. Jüngel, *Karl Barth*, 56.

subject called "theology". The eventual assimilation and absorption of theology to non-theology, reaching its apogee in the second half of the nineteenth century and culminating in the methodological programmes of von Harnack and Troeltsch,⁶⁴ had seen to that. Accordingly, Overbeck's conclusion amounted to the charge that if theology had any intellectual integrity at all it would acknowledge it no longer existed and had in fact ceased to exist some time before.

But, according to Barth, that Overbeck was never anything but a theologian explains why more positive statements "which deal with the possibility of a theology of greater insight and more caution"⁶⁵ "escaped the author almost against his will".⁶⁶ Examples Barth cites are:

'Theology cannot be re-established except by audacity.' [...] 'Only a heroic Christianity which takes its position without regard to any era and establishes itself on itself alone can escape the fate of Jesuitizing.' [...] No presentation which attempts to 'establish Christianity historically will ever be possible; only that composed from the heart of the matter itself, the non-historical Christianity.'⁶⁷

But as Barth is only too well aware, Overbeck's diagnosis of the condition of modern theology spares no prospect of cure:

I have no intention of reforming theology. I admit its nullity in and of itself and I am not merely attacking its temporary decay and its present basis.⁶⁸

And Barth adds (not without dialectical irony):

An end to Christianity! (*Finis Christianismi!*) rings his prophetic imprecation - still more an end to theology!⁶⁹

Indeed as Jüngel points out, Barth's understanding of the first remark missed Overbeck's point and was in fact rather a grotesque misunderstanding [*ein groteskes Missverständnis*].⁷⁰ For what Overbeck had actually said was: "It may be true that

⁶⁴ See collection of essays in J P Clayton, (ed), *Ernst Troeltsch and the future of theology* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976).

⁶⁵ Barth, "Unsettled Questions for Theology Today", 72.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 72.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 72.

⁶⁸ Quoted by Barth, *Ibid*, 71.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 71.

⁷⁰ Jüngel, *Karl Barth*, 54

theology can no longer be re-established except by audacity. But what help is that to a person who has already lost faith in theology as a result of studying early church history!"⁷¹ In other words, since it is none other than non-theology that leads to his loss of faith in the existence of theology, Overbeck's final submission to the thesis of the "nullity of theology in and of itself" is a corollary of endorsing the thesis that theology cannot be *other than* non-theology. Overbeck believed that one did non-theology or nothing. It is in this sense that he made explicit what was implicit in Hume.

Barth agreed with Overbeck's premise that modern theology was a species of non-theology, but he did not thereby affirm the thesis of the (necessary) non-existence of theology "in and of itself". (For all Overbeck's acumen is not in doubt, the meaning of his "theology in and of itself" does not anticipate Barth's.)

Kant's resolution of the dilemma for philosophy was to point to the *a priori* synthetic truths: the *a priori* synthetic truths exist *ergo* the possibility of philosophy exists. Barth too responds to Overbeck and therefore to Hume at the level of truth but with an important difference.

Kant's additional sub-category of truth was just that - a *sub-category* of truth: it is one more type of truth encompassed by a *general* concept of truth. Kant's disagreement with Hume was, if you like, only a disagreement over degree, it was not a disagreement over kind. It extended only to what truths there were, not what kind of truths there were. On the latter, Hume and Kant were both agreed. In other words, Kant affirmed philosophical *truth* but not *philosophical* truth. Indeed as will be demonstrated in chapter 5 the species of philosophical truth common to, and presupposed by, Hume and Kant and others of the classical modern philosophical tradition, (Descartes is the other preeminent example), is none other than

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 55. Jüngel writes: "Overbeck in one of his numerous sketches, as malicious as they were apt ... had sneered at the announcement of his Berlin colleague G Runze, who was publicizing his upcoming lectures on no less a topic than 'The Best That There Is to Know in the History of Religions'. By no means then, did Overbeck ever think that theology could - even with audacity - be 'reestablished'. The bitter irony of his remark makes it an argument *ad absurdum*. Either Barth did not notice this irony or he consciously ignored it." *Ibid*, 54-55. Whether Barth did not notice the undoubted irony or consciously ignored it, his response to Overbeck in both *Romans* II and the *Church Dogmatics* (as we shall see in chapters 2 and 3) out-does Overbeck for irony.

philosophical realism. Overbeck too is in the grip of a general concept of truth. The realm of truth was completely accounted for in terms of non-theology. That is why he could not see how theology is possible. Even Kierkegaard's paradoxical manoeuvres in epistemology are still a function of philosophy (a philosophical theology), still, that is, done out of implicit deference to a general concept of truth.

Barth's response at the level of truth is to affirm, not one more truth alongside all the other truths (as Kant did), but *sui generis theological* truth. Where the Enlightenment and Kant in particular defined autonomy as the self-determination of the will, apart from any object willed, the autonomy of theology implies the self-determination of theology apart from any objects external to *sui generis theological* truth, i.e., the truths of non-theology (history, anthropology etc.). Theology, in the words of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, "must mean something whose place is above or below the natural sciences, not beside them."⁷² *Contra* Overbeck and Hume, Barth's response is really that *theology* must be re-established with audacity or more simply: *theology* must be re-established (for audacity is after all no guarantee that it is not non-theology that will once more be re-established!). Thus Barth's thesis is the possibility of the *sui generis* autonomy of theology.

The answer to the question what *sui generis* theological truth is in Barth's theology can be answered only by examining how it manifests itself in Barth's theological writings, from "The Strange New World Within the Bible" through *Romans* II, through *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* to the *Church Dogmatics*. That is *inter alia* the remit of chapters 2-8. *Sui generis* theological truth is a concept that can only emerge in Barth's first order descriptions and delineations rather than from systematically framed definitions conceived in *a priori* fashion.

However, at this stage certain formal implications concerning the resolution of the dilemma can be drawn by examining the precise logical relationships existing among *sui generis* theological truth, *sui generis* theological problems, and *sui generis* theology itself. These logical relationships can be summarised as follows. Where there is theological truth there is the possibility of theological problems;

⁷² Wittgenstein, *TLP* 4.111.

insofar as there are problems of theological truth (there are *sui generis* theological problems) there is the possibility of theology. Where there is theological truth, where there are theological problems, two methodological theses are applicable to theology as conceived by Barth. These are:

(i) If x is theology then x is not a function of non-theology

from which it follows

(ii) If x is a function of non-theology then x is non-theology.

Moreover, the following converse propositions are also valid: it logically follows that if there is theology (not merely the possibility of it) there are theological problems and there is theological truth; it follows that if there is no theological truth there are no theological problems, and if no theological problems, no theology.

VI. Ingolf Dalferth's 'Resolution' of the Metatheological Dilemma Unnecessarily Weak.

This interpretation of Barth relieves the weakness in Ingolf Dalferth's position on the possibility of theological problems.⁷³ Dalferth restates the metatheological dilemma implicit in Hume (thus the reference to the logical empiricists) along all the classical logical dimensions:

The argument so far has assumed that there are theological problems. But precisely this has been questioned. The problems which theology attempts to solve - as Hegel, Freud and logical empiricists have argued in their different ways - are said either to be unintelligible and thus unsolvable or, if they are intelligible, they are not specifically theological and cannot be solved by theology. Under the philosophical microscope they turn out to be the result of conceptual confusion or dissolve into a set of historical, philosophical, psychological and sociological problems which fall into the domain of these disciplines but do not require any specifically theological treatment. What traditionally has been taken to be a theological problem really is an unanalysed complex of spurious and/or non-theological problems. It follows that theology can be reduced without loss to science and philosophy and, therefore, no longer claim to be an autonomous and intellectually respectable discipline. I shall call this the *reductionist argument*.⁷⁴

⁷³ I Dalferth, *Theology and Philosophy* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1988), 13-17.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 13. Thus Dalferth perceives that Barth "put his finger on the dilemma of modern theology: the eschatological nature of true Christian faith excludes any theological synthesis of faith and the world while the modern consciousness of truth excludes any fideist retreat to the safe shores of the internal perspective of faith alone." *Ibid*, 112.

Moreover, Dalferth, just like Barth, contends that to show traditionally conceived theological problems are intelligible is only a necessary and not a sufficient condition of their irreducibility to non-theological problems:

What we also need to show is that those problems are such that they withstand reduction to non-theological problems i.e. that they raise genuinely *theological* and not merely historical, philosophical, psychological or sociological issues.⁷⁵

That is, Dalferth concurs with two other methodological theses of Barth's implicit in the latter's acknowledgement of Hume's metatheological dilemma. These are:

(iii) If x is rational/intelligible and purports to be a theological problem it does not follow that it is a theological problem

from which it follows

(iv) if x is rational/intelligible and purports to be theology it does not follow that it is theology.

Dalferth asserts that there is "sufficient reason to reject the reductionist argument"⁷⁶ but his rejection consists of no more than the assertion that it is *not proven* that theological problems are impossible. Dalferth's argument proceeds along the following lines. Even if, he says, the sceptic's arguments against genuine experiential, philosophical, and revelational theological problems

were sound and cogent, they would not suffice to show that the three sets described can include no genuine theological problems; and as long as this is not shown, we are justified in presuming that at least some of the problems of traditional theology are innocent of incoherence and reducibility until proven guilty.⁷⁷

It can be shown that this conclusion is an unnecessarily weak one. For even if Dalferth is claiming (he does not prove) we are *rationaly* justified in presuming some of these problems are genuine theological problems it does not then follow, as he implicitly acknowledges, that theological problems are possible. This is because from the premise that it is not proven that theological problems are impossible it does not then follow that theological problems are possible. In other

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 13-14.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 16.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 16.

words, from the premise that

(1) premises a,b,c,d, ..., do not entail theological problems are impossible,

it does not follow that

(2) theological problems are possible.

The reason Dalferth's conclusion is *unnecessarily* weak is of course that if as according to Barth there is *sui generis* theological truth then it follows both that theological problems are possible and that theology is possible.

One weakness of Dalferth's statement of the metatheological dilemma is that it lacks an explicit historical perspective even though the examples it cites - Hegel, Freud, the logical empiricists - are all this side of the Enlightenment. Although Dalferth is aware of Barth's historical context, Barth's relation to the dilemma is assumed to be fundamentally the same as that of the thought of Aristotle, Augustine, St. Thomas, Calvin and Luther.⁷⁸ He analyses Barth in relation to a unhistoricized dilemma. While there is no reason why such thinkers could not have resolved a dilemma not articulated until the Enlightenment and Hume and Kant, that their theological response is not made in the wake of the historical metatheological crisis makes it less probable their work would have contained even the seeds of a solution to the problematic. Thus that Dalferth does not derive that the pre-Enlightenment theologians prove the possibility of non-reducible theological problems is simply due to the fact that they do *not* and *cannot* resolve the dilemma. (That Dalferth does derive this result on behalf of the pre-Enlightenment theologians follows simply from the observation that he only derives that it is *not proven* theological problems are impossible.)

Where his conclusion breaks down is in its generalisation to Barth *qua* theologian in the wake of the Enlightenment legacy. That Dalferth does not derive Barth's theology proves theological problems are possible is not an incredible oversight on his part, it is that his own interpretation of Barth cannot in principle resolve the metatheological dilemma. In other words, Dalferth does not provide

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 15-17.

sufficient conditions for resolving the dilemma because his interpretation of Barth does not provide sufficient conditions. But unlike the pre-Enlightenment theologians, Barth does provide sufficient conditions. Hence Dalferth's interpretation of Barth must be invalid.⁷⁹

VII. The Task of Theology Taken Over by Other Disciplines?

There is yet another problem with Dalferth's analysis. Since he does not prove that theological problems are possible, but only claims we are rationally justified in presuming their existence, he has no means by which to prove even that theology is possible. But, according to Dalferth, that does not matter so much since, as Barth "envisaged", theology "may well disappear", because "all of its tasks have been taken over by other disciplines."⁸⁰

Although one can agree that forwarding a proof of the (logical) inevitability (necessity not possibility) of theology is not a necessary condition of showing that those problems are genuine theological problems,⁸¹ (though such necessity is a sufficient condition as is the possibility of theology itself), it does not then follow that theology may well disappear in the sense Dalferth attributes to Barth at *Church Dogmatics* I/1.

The logical structure of Barth's argument is as follows:⁸²

- (1) Other sciences could deal with the problem of truth or agreement of distinctive talk about God with Jesus Christ.
- (2) But they don't at present and never have done in the past.
- (3) Hence the need for theology to discharge this duty.

But from (1),

⁷⁹ For Dalferth's interpretation of Barth, see *Ibid*, 112-148; see also Dalferth, "Karl Barth's Eschatological Realism", in S Sykes (ed), *Karl Barth Centenary Essays* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989), 14-45. This issue is tackled in more detail in chapter 7 of this thesis where Dalferth's interpretation of Barth as a theological realist is rejected.

⁸⁰ Dalferth, *Theology and Philosophy*, 14.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 14.

⁸² This structure is derived from Barth, *CD* I/1, 5-7.

(4) In the future the other sciences might set themselves this task.

(3) is self-evident from the structure of the argument. It is obvious that (1) is the linchpin of Dalferth's assertion. To be sure, Barth writes:

Even the asserted independence of theology in relation to other sciences cannot be proved to be necessary in principle. It is indeed unfortunate that the question of the truth of talk about God should be handled as a question apart by a special faculty, and while we have to recognise that such a course is unavoidable in practice, we cannot have any final reasons to justify it. Only theological arrogance could argue the point on other than practical grounds. Within the sphere of the Church philosophy, history, sociology, psychology, or pedagogics, whether individually or in conjunction, might well take up the task about God by its being as the Church, thus making a special theology superfluous. Theology does not in fact possess special keys to special doors. Nor does it control a basis of knowledge which might not find actualisation in other sciences. Nor does it know an object of enquiry necessarily concealed from other sciences. [...] There might be such a thing as *philosophia christiana*.⁸³

It is clear that Dalferth's assertion is derived from what Barth has to say toward the end of this passage. This latter can be summarised as:

1. Theology is in possession of no special rationality.
2. There is no epistemology necessarily exclusive to theology.
3. Theology is not solipsistic: other sciences must be able to 'see', must have the same access to, the object of theology. Therefore there might be such a thing as *philosophia christiana*.⁸⁴

But though Dalferth claims that Barth asserts theological problems are not necessarily dealt with by theology, what Barth actually says is: theological problems are not necessarily dealt with by theology but insofar as they are dealt with by science it is science shorn of its *sui generis* identity - its methodological principles. In other words, though it is called "science", it has fatally compromised its identity. In fact "all science might ultimately be theology". This follows from the fact that (2) above is derived from a passage providing essential context to the one quoted at (1). It goes as follows:

The other sciences have not in fact recognised and adopted the task of theology. To be sure, attempts have always been made on all sides to criticise and correct the

⁸³ *Ibid*, 5.

⁸⁴ It is submitted that Barth's desire to protect theology against the charge that it speaks of a private and not a public object is the underlying rationale to the position he takes on the whole issue in question.

Church's talk about God. But what is required is its criticism and correction in the light of the being of the Church, of Jesus Christ as its basis, goal and content.⁸⁵

It continues:

In fact, however, even though we cannot show that this is in accordance with any necessity of principle, even those historians, pedagogues, etc., and especially philosophers who kindly take this aspect into account always miss the real problem by setting it within the sphere of their own sciences... . The result is even worse when done in the name of "theology". In practice, the achievements of the philosopher, historian, etc., can be of only indirect significance to the problem which here confronts us, i.e., by way of a specific interpretation. Directly, ... philosophy, history, psychology etc., have succeeded in practice only in increasing the self-alienation of the Church and the distortion and confusion of its talk about God. And in the interpretation offered, as the relevant experts at once object, philosophy ceases to be philosophy or history.⁸⁶

The message is clear: science posing as theology only leads to confusion. The only way it might bring clarification to a theological problem is if it is in fact *theology*. This is indeed what Barth argues at (4): All sciences might ultimately be theology.⁸⁷ But only if they do not "set the problem within the sphere of their own sciences", or judge it according to "alien principles rather than its own principle".⁸⁸ But in that case since the discipline in question is no longer judging according to its own principles but rather according to principles alien to itself, it cannot be the same subject; otherwise the identity of other sciences is not derived from their methodological principles. Thus when Barth claims "all sciences might ultimately be theology", he can only mean that though they are science *de dicto* they are not science *de re*.

Thus only in a very specialised sense could Barth be said to have envisaged that theology may well disappear because all of its tasks have been taken over by other disciplines; for according to Barth these other disciplines could be nothing else but theology itself.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 6.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 6. Barth believes in fact that it is science posing as "theology" rather than science unashamedly being itself, that makes theology necessary. It is indeed perhaps because of the former that there is theology. For if by theology one means theological problems then theology does not have to exist. Theology only exists because theological problems exist and theological problems exist because of a divergence between the Church's talk about God and *sui generis* theological truth.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 7.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 6.

Concluding Remarks.

In this first chapter it has been argued that there are no good reasons not to understand Barth's theology in terms of the Enlightenment; indeed, not only does Barth take up the challenge of the Enlightenment legacy, to the extent that his theology cannot be understood apart from Overbeck's dilemma, it cannot be understood apart from the Enlightenment. Kant defined autonomy as the self-determination of the will, apart from any object willed; the autonomy of theology implies the self-determination of theology apart from objects external to *sui generis* theological truth, i.e., non-theology (history, anthropology, etc.).

The scene is set: Overbeck's dilemma is of immense importance to understanding Barth's theology. As will be seen in the following chapters, not only does it inform *Romans II*, it is the key to *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* and the *Church Dogmatics*.

Chapter Two

I. "Wittgenstein's Vienna" and Barth as Metatheological Critic: *Romans II* and Overbeck's Dilemma.

That all of Barth's theology is best understood within the horizon of the specific Enlightenment legacy of Hume and Overbeck's metatheological dilemma sets a constraint on the answer to the following question: into which cultural peer-group can *Romans II* be best assimilated? For that cultural peer-group must of necessity be assimilated for the same or similar reason into that specific legacy. Otherwise, whatever characteristics it has in common with *Romans II* cannot be regarded as absolutely integral to this work.

To assimilate Barth into the tradition of Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), and at one remove, Karl Kraus (1874-1936), Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) and Adolf Loos (1874-1933) - key figures of "Wittgenstein's Vienna" - is a move not without attendant difficulties. Yet such difficulties must be judged in the light of the unsatisfactory nature of attempts to place Barth in alternative traditions. The objection that Barth is Swiss and not Austrian can be countered with two observations. First, Wittgenstein, Kraus, Loos and Schoenberg can themselves be subsumed into a larger tradition beyond their immediate Viennese *milieu* and indeed beyond an indigenous Austrian tradition. Second, though Barth himself was conscious of his "Swissness",¹ it is hard to see into which specific Swiss tradition

¹ Barth was born in Basel in 1886. It was in the Swiss canton in Aargau, in the village of Safenwil that Barth was to write *Romans I and II*. And from 1935 until his death he lived in Basel, where all but the first two half volumes of the *Church Dogmatics* were written. Perhaps more importantly, he was a citizen of Basel. Basel was his family's city. Both Barth's grandfathers had been pastors in Basel; hence Barth's parents had been born and grew up there. Barth himself was to live the greater part of his life in Basel, and an even greater part in Switzerland. He also felt that to belong to Basel was something special. "We breathe a distinctive kind of air here" and "there is a particular spiritual tradition here, which probably has something to do with climate of the place", he said. Quoted in Busch, *Barth*, 5. Yet Barth was to counter the accusation that he was not (to use Emmanuel Hirsch's phrase) "a German from boot to bonnet" with a deeply felt sense of "dual nationality". That is, he was certainly Swiss, but he also thought he knew what it was to "feel like a German":

"I am well aware of the Swiss element in me, but at the same time want to remain totally and unflinchingly in the centre of German theology and the German Church. [...] And if there is to be talk of my certificate of origin. I cannot think of a better way of showing my love of Germany and my identification with it than by remaining in the heart of Germany,

he could be assimilated.² The implication is that there is no such *a priori* argument against the possibility of assimilating *Romans II* into "Wittgenstein's Vienna".

Still more encouraging is the fact that the most successful attempt to date to assimilate Barth straightforwardly into a German theological tradition is based on a criterion of membership involving no more than an implicit acknowledgement of what it is the tradition opposes rather than what it is for. Gerhard Ebeling's study "The Significance of the Critical Historical Method for Church and Theology in Protestantism" puts the case for this tradition this way:

It is characteristic of the nature of Protestantism that this new factor has proceeded from theology and has remained confined, in the first instance at least, to the work of the theologians. Authors and works so far apart to our way of thinking as Rudolf Otto with his book on the Holy, Karl Barth with his *Romans*, Karl Holl with his collection of Luther essays, Wilhelm Lutgert with his work on the Religion of German Idealism and its End, Emil Brunner with his Schleiermacher book *Die Mystik und das Wort*, Friedrich Gogarten with his controversy with cultural idealism in *Illusionen*, Rudolf Bultmann with his book on Jesus - they all form, in that more or less accidental chronological order, a chain of effective impulses toward a thorough-going new orientation of theological thinking. The right to join their names together like that rests above all merely on the fact that at roughly the same time and in relative independence from each other they threw theology into a ferment. And yet surely more than that can be said of their mutual affinity, be it ever so limited. Even the one most strongly indebted to the nineteenth century in his method and his way of thinking, Rudolf Otto, certainly also had his share in contributing from the religious-historical standpoint toward the unsettling of a popular theological liberalism, and in his own way likewise towards the pointing up of elements grown unfamiliar in the Reformers' faith. For the consciousness of being unable simply to continue on the nineteenth century's line of theological development, and of being called to subject church and theology to a thorough going critical revision that takes its bearing from the Reformation, is the basic tendency that has established itself since the end of the First World War with surprising speed and power of appeal.³

even if I differ from so many Germans by being Swiss." Quoted in Busch, *Barth*, 217.

² Though the eighteenth century, for example, is a great century for Switzerland in intellectual and cultural matters - Albrecht von Haller, poet, anatomist, physiologist; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the Bernoulli family of mathematicians - it is difficult to see what Barth has in common with them (and indeed what each has in common with the other) except at a most general level. See: J R de Salis, *Switzerland and Empire: essays and reflections*, translated by A and E Henderson, (London, Wolff, 1971), 29-30; Oechli, *History of Switzerland, 1499-1914*, translated by E and C Paul, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1922), 245-7; G Thürer, *Free and Swiss: the Story of Switzerland*, adapted and translated by R P Heller and E Long, (London, Wolff, 1970), 73-77. Of Rousseau, de Salis observes that "his feeling for nature and his democratic ideas are quite Swiss." De Salis, *Switzerland*, 29.

³ Ebeling, "The Significance of the Critical Historical Method for Church and Theology in Protestantism" in *Word and Faith*, translated by J Leitch, (London, SCM Press, 1963), 23.

But what is the common link to this "thorough-going new orientation of theological thinking" beyond the negative one that they all in their various ways opposed one or another strand or school of nineteenth century liberal theology? Beyond this assertion, Ebeling is left with very little, acknowledging that "it is very difficult to give more precise substance to the common factor which comes to expression here."⁴ And of Barth specifically and the 'dialectical theology' group to which he belonged, Ebeling acknowledges the fact that the group broke up after a relatively short time and "no sharply definable groupings have resulted from this process."⁵ He concludes that it is only "the immediate entourage of Karl Barth - though his actual influence extends far beyond it and indisputably sounds the dominant note in the present theological situation - [that] forms a more or less firmly outlined unity."⁶

Such historical facts are of course to be expected if there is no positive bond holding together the elements of a new theological orientation. Once the common enemy, so to speak, had been defeated (more or less), such common cause as there had been was no more (hence Barth's parting from Gogarten and the other 'dialectical theologians'). Therefore we are left with a straightforward choice: Barth left to himself unless one can assimilate him into a tradition based on a positive affinity.

Over and against the 'negative' company of Otto, Holl, Lutgert, Brunner, Gogarten and Bultmann, it is submitted that the company of Wittgenstein, Kraus, Loos, and Schoenberg, represent a more resonant interpretative perspective. Just as Wittgenstein is a metaphilosophical critic, Kraus a metalinguistic critic, Loos a meta-art, -architectural and -design critic, Schoenberg a metamusical critic, Barth's *Romans II* is the work of a metatheological critic whose blue-print for the possibility of theology "in and for itself" is the life-long proclamation "God is *God*". 'God is *God*' is the blue-print for a *sui generis* theological realm belonging to theology "in

⁴ *Ibid*, 23.

⁵ *Ibid*, 23-4.

⁶ *Ibid*, 24.

and for itself". In that sense it is a blue-print for theological truth. Thus as the guarantee of theological truth, 'God is *God*' entails the possibility of theology "in and for itself" and the existence of theology entails 'God is *God*' (theses (i)-(ii) in chapter 1).

II. The *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and Hume's Metaphilosophical Dilemma.

Continuous with the bourgeois and nationalist ethos of the second half of the nineteenth century is a positivist ethos that manifests itself in most intellectual and artistic activity of that period, including philosophy, theology, and music.⁷ That this

⁷ Continuous with the prevailing positivist *bourgeois* nationalist ethos at this time is the theology of the German world of the second half of the nineteenth century which betrayed - in the words of Paul Tillich - "an attitude of self-sufficient finitude". Welch, *Nineteenth Century Theology*, vol 1, 4. It was the attitude of the self-satisfied bourgeois man, satisfied with who he is and what belongs to him as a member of this or that nation. In theology it was Albrecht Ritschl whose theology with all due propriety flew this particular flag. This was how Barth saw it:

He stands with incredible clearness and firmness (truly with both feet) upon the ground of his 'ideal of life', the very epitome of the national-liberal German *bourgeois* of the age of Bismarck. Barth, *Protestant Theology*, 656.

Ritschl's "ideal of life" - that which in theology served as the epitome of *bourgeois* national society - was heavily charged with Kant's conception of the highest good, the animating force behind Kant's notions of duty and moral law. Thus Ritschl's theology is an antimetaphysical moralism which observes, is content to remain within, the finite boundaries circumscribed by the transcendental analytic. Ritschl's theology conforms to "the pressure of the positivism prevailing in the second half of the nineteenth century." Barth, "Evangelical Theology in the 19th Century", *Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers*, No 8, translated by J S McNab, (Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1959), 56. It conforms to the positivist ethos prevailing in German, inclusive of Austrian, science. Indeed the ethos then burgeoning close to home and with which the nineteenth century was drawing to a close was, in the wake of the 1848 revolutions, at once *bourgeois* and nationalist and as such its prime motivating force the spirit of Prussian militarism which prospered under Bismarck and went on to more ambitious things under Wilhelm II. See: W Carr, *A History of Germany, 1815-1945* (London, Edward Arnold, 1987); G A Craig, *Germany 1866-1945* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1981). The German population of the Habsburg Empire whose dominance became increasingly undermined by the diplomatic compromises of the Habsburg dynasty in the face of Slav and Czech nationalist discontent and tension within its borders, turned more and more to Berlin and Germany. The growth of German nationalism, the emergence of the Pan-German movement under Georg Schönerer whose aim was the union of Austrian Germans with the powerful German Reich of Wilhelm II, the Christian Socialist programme led by Karl Lueger, whose appeal lay in the lower middle classes, were all manifestations of this phenomenon. See: C A McCartney, *The Habsburg Empire 1790-1918* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1968); McCartney, *The House of Austria: The Later Phase, 1790-1918* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1978); A J P Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1809-1918: A History of the Austrian Empire and Austria-Hungary* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1981); R A Kann, *The Multinational Empire: Nationalism and Natural Reform in the Habsburg Monarchy 1848-1918*, 2 vols, (New York, Octagon, 1950); F Field, *The Last Days of Mankind: Karl Kraus and his Vienna* (London, St.

is true of the most influential school in philosophy in Central Europe is one essential ingredient of the paradox that Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922) was assimilated into a positivist legacy (and hence to his way of thinking assimilated to non-philosophy). All Wittgenstein's writings, excepting the manuscripts which became *The Blue and Brown Books*, were written in German. But they did not find a receptive ear in twentieth century German philosophy. German philosophy both before and after the war remained loyal on the whole to its Kantian heritage and transcendental philosophy. The influence of the later Husserl, and later of Heidegger remained dominant right up to the sixties.⁸ In Austria the situation was different. There Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* was one, if not the, major influence on the Vienna Circle and logical positivism. The phenomenon of the Vienna Circle and logical positivism in the 1930s was the culmination of a homogeneous tradition of Austrian philosophy which had begun with Brentano's *Psychology From an Empirical Standpoint* in 1874.⁹ This tradition had more in common with German science, with the science of Helmholtz, Hertz, and Kirchnoff at Berlin, than it had with German philosophy. *Vera philosophiae methodus nulla alia nisi scientiae naturalis est* (the true method

Martin's Press, 1967). It is noteworthy that German nationalism also took hold of the mind of Barth's Germanic Switzerland toward the end of the nineteenth century:

"If the first half of the nineteenth century had been characterised by Switzerland's emancipation from French, and then, generally, from foreign influence; if the four decades which followed 1848 were a period of national expansion and self-assertion of a newly established Swiss confederation, the last ten years of the century and the period 1900-1918 saw a very peculiar development. With astonishing rapidity and without any apparent resistance, Germanic Switzerland slipped into complete cultural, economic, and even moral, but not political subservience to Imperial Germany. [...] The fascination which Imperial Germany, the Kaiser, his people and their institutions exerted over the liberal and libertarian Swiss democrats of German stock between the 90s and 1918 was so strong that at the time eventual complete absorption appeared by no means impossible. In fact the Pan-German league had as one of its declared aims incorporation of Germanic Switzerland into a greater *Reich*, along with Austria and the Netherlands." G Soloveytschik, *Switzerland in Perspective* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1954), 208-9. That Barth was aware of this historical phenomenon, see Barth, *The Germans and Ourselves* (London, Nisbet and Co., 1945).

⁸ R Haller, "Wittgenstein and Austrian Philosophy", in Nyíri (ed), *Austrian Philosophy: Studies and Texts* (Munich, Philosophia-Verlag, 1981), 97.

⁹ *Ibid*, 92.

of philosophy is none other than that of natural science) was Brentano's guiding philosophical principle.¹⁰ Mach, Brentano's successor at Vienna, continued the empirical tradition and defended a presuppositionless and hence antimetaphysical positivism in the sense of Hume.¹¹ In the Vienna Circle's eyes the seminal achievement of *Tractatus* had been to provide a criterion of meaningfulness that demarcated between science and non-science. From this perspective it naturally followed that Wittgenstein's objective had been to protect the whole body of meaningful statements, which is to say, the propositions of natural science, from the encroachment of the pseudo-statements of metaphysics and theology. Otto Neurath, a member of the Vienna Circle, attributed the following view to Wittgenstein:

The increase of metaphysical and theological leanings which shows itself today in the many associations and sects, in books and journals, in talks and university lectures seems to be based upon the fierce social and economic struggles of the present: one group of combatants, holding fast to traditional social forms, cultivate traditional attitudes of metaphysics and theology whose content has long since been superseded; while the other group, especially in Central Europe, faces modern times, rejects these views and takes its stand upon the ground of empirical science. This development is connected with that of the modern process of production, which leaves ever less room for metaphysical ideas. It is also connected with the disappointment of people with the attitude of those who preach traditional metaphysical and theological doctrines.¹²

Rudolf Carnap spoke about the influence the *Tractatus* had on him:

The most important insight I gained from his work was the conception that the truth of logical statements is based only on their logical structure and on the meaning of the terms. Logical statements are true under all conceivable circumstances; thus their truth is independent of the contingent facts of the world. On the other hand, it follows that these statements do not say anything about the world and thus have no factual content.

Another influential idea of Wittgenstein's was the insight that many philosophical sentences, especially in traditional metaphysics, are pseudo-sentences, devoid of cognitive content. I found Wittgenstein's view on this point close to the one I had previously developed under the influence of anti-metaphysical scientists and philosophers¹³

The logical positivists also read the *Tractatus* as advocating a verifiability principle of meaning against which the meaningfulness of scientific propositions had

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 93.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 98.

¹² Quoted, *Ibid*, 76.

¹³ Quoted in Fann, *Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1969), 34.

to be measured. Epistemologically this converged with the supposition that the mode of verifiability lay in sense experience. Thus Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* was ultimately read as a positivist tract entering into the legacy of Hume. It was what was said that was important and not that which could not be said. The latter was simply nonsense.

The immediate *milieu* into which Wittgenstein's works were born was England where they were received into the academic tradition of Anglo-Saxon philosophy. This was as true of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* as it was of the *Philosophical Investigations*. Just as the Vienna Circle adopted the attitude that true philosophy was to be identified with the Enlightenment generally and with David Hume's empiricism in particular then so Bertrand Russell too judged Wittgenstein by the canons of the Enlightenment. He too praised the *Tractatus* and viewed its achievement as that of providing the foundations of a the general philosophy of the scientific conception of the world. His "Lectures on Logical Atomism" owed much to the metaphysical apparatus propounded in the *Tractatus*.¹⁴ Like the logical positivists, Russell assumed that the fundamental point of the *Tractatus* resided in what could be positively said. Indeed he paid scant respect to Wittgenstein's showing and saying distinction, declaring that "Mr Wittgenstein seems to be able to say a great deal about what can't be said."¹⁵

Here then is the paradox: the *Tractatus* was assimilated into the tradition of Austrian scientific positivistic philosophy as represented by Brentano and Mach

¹⁴ The success of science led philosophers to borrow from the methods of science in their pursuit of truth. Russell conceived philosophy as almost continuous with the natural sciences. Its distinguishing feature was that it pursued theories on the most general features of the world:

"... there are two different ways in which a philosophy may seek to base itself upon science. It may emphasise the most general results of science and seek to give greater generality and unity to these results ... or it may study the methods of science, and seek to apply these methods with the necessary adaptation to its own particular province. Much philosophy inspired by science has gone astray through preoccupation with results momentarily supposed to have been achieved. It is not results but methods that can be transferred with profit to the sphere of philosophy." B Russell, "On Scientific Method in Philosophy", in *Mysticism and logic and other essays*, (London, Longmans Green, 1918), 98. Russell applied this methodological principle to the metaphysical problem of the ultimate constituents of the world. See B Russell, "Logical Atomism", in *The Monist* 1918-1919, nos 28-29, in B Russell, *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*, vol 8, (London, G Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1986).

¹⁵ Russell, "Introduction", in Wittgenstein, *TLP*, xxi.

(Stern takes the view that "if Wittgenstein's philosophy is to be placed in a tradition, then the one summed up in the old story of the Austrian railway line - from Bolzano to Brentano, Meinong, and Husserl to *Endstation* Wittgenstein - is undoubtedly more relevant than any other");¹⁶ it was hailed as the Bible of the logical positivists; it was accordingly perceived as continuing the philosophy of David Hume. In other words, not only was it perceived as an epistemological treatise,¹⁷ it was taken to be a more formal (because stated in the language of formal logic) restatement of Hume's dilemma. Yet though the limits of meaningful discourse drawn by the *Tractatus* coincide, more or less, with Hume's definition of factual discourse,¹⁸ paradoxically it is as a resolution rather than as a restatement of Hume's dilemma that the *Tractatus* should be read.

In this respect, it is the comparison with Kant rather than Hume that suggests itself. Yet while there is no contradiction involved in asserting that both Kant and Wittgenstein resolved Hume's dilemma,¹⁹ Wittgenstein's resolution differs

¹⁶ Stern, "Wittgenstein in Context", 166.

¹⁷ W B Bartley III writes: "Readers of the *Tractatus* - including, conspicuously, most of the logical positivists - have often supposed that elementary propositions report sense experiences." See Bartley III, *Wittgenstein* (London, Quartet Books, 1977), 45. Unfortunately, he adds that "it is probably safe to assume that Wittgenstein did have, and must have had, *some* such idea in mind." *Ibid*, 45. This is precisely what it is not safe to assume since the admission of sense-experience would have, as a species of non-philosophy, compromised the *sui generis* philosophical realm that it will be argued was Wittgenstein's objective.

¹⁸ "The correct method in philosophy would really be the following: to say nothing except what can be said i.e. propositions of natural science - i.e. something that has nothing to do with philosophy - and then, whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had failed to give meaning to certain signs in his propositions." Wittgenstein, *TLP*. 6.53.

¹⁹ That Barth resolves Hume's metatheological dilemma is obviously not dependent on whether Wittgenstein resolves Hume's metaphilosophical dilemma. Moreover, that Wittgenstein plays the role of metanarrative to Barth does not entail that Hume's metaphilosophical dilemma is resolved by Wittgenstein *but not* Kant. They may both have resolved it. Yet I do in fact take the view that it is Wittgenstein and not Kant who resolves Hume's metaphilosophical dilemma, that it is his conception of philosophy rather than the Kantian conception that restores the *sui generis* autonomy of philosophy. That Kant failed to solve Hume's metaphilosophical dilemma is obviously a thesis in itself. Yet it would I believe include the following reasons why any claim for Kant's success can be viewed with some doubts. It can be argued that Kant saving philosophy from extinction is not a sufficient condition or guarantee of autonomy. In other words, the Critical Philosophy does not sufficiently distinguish itself from science; philosophy remains compromised by non-philosophy. First, its concept of truth is in fact the most general concept of truth possible and therefore criterial for all the sciences assumed to be under its stewardship. Second, for all that the Critical Philosophy

markedly from, and indeed conflicts with, Kant's. First, unlike Kant's, Wittgenstein's resolution does not involve positing the existence of *a priori* synthetic truths. Second, what he does posit excludes the possibility of such an existence. Indeed, the manner in which Wittgenstein resolves Hume's dilemma does not follow the path taken by the transcendental question.²⁰ To be sure, just as Kant's critique set a limit to reason, the *Tractatus* "set a limit to thought, or rather not to thought but to the expression of thoughts".²¹ But where in Kant the bounds of sense are described by *a priori* synthetic truths, in Wittgenstein this is determined by the essential nature of representation, which in turn is determined by mind-independent logical forms of reality.²² In other words, Wittgenstein is closer to Hume than to Kant here (thus the rejection of *a priori* synthetic truths and the identification of meaningfulness with scientific discourse at *TLP* 6.53). In other words, somewhat ironically the intersection with Kant occurs where Wittgenstein *restates* rather than resolves Hume's metaphilosophical dilemma.²³

initiated a famous 'turn to the subject', it would not do Kant an injustice to call his transcendental philosophy a transcendental science since his objective - to map out the necessary structure of metaphysical reality via the transcendental categories - presupposed a investigative approach to the number and nature of these categories. Third, like his immediate predecessors, Kant thought philosophy like science proves things. Thus, for example, he thought it was the task of philosophy to prove the existence of the external world. See Hacker, *Insight*, 208. The assertion that the Enlightenment legacy had to wait until Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* before Hume's metaphilosophical dilemma was resolved implies that though historically speaking Kant's critical philosophy was the exemplar and culmination par excellence of Enlightenment Philosophy such that it discharged its critical duty, it did not embody the legacy of the Enlightenment with respect to autonomy. Hence the chair of *sui generis* philosophy was vacant pending.

²⁰ This I believe is the rationale behind Pears' remark that the Kantian explanation works rather better for the form of the *Tractatus* rather than its content. See D F Pears, *The False Prison. A Study of the Development of Wittgenstein's Philosophy*, vol 1, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987), 20.

²¹ Wittgenstein, *TLP*, 3. See also Pears, *Wittgenstein* (Glasgow, Fontana, 1971), 12.

²² Hacker, *Insight*, 23. Thus Bartley is right to say that this doctrine is "not only *non-Kantian* but *pre-Kantian* in spirit. [...] Before Kant it was commonly assumed that some sort of harmony existed between the human mind and the external world so that the human mind could apprehend ... the nature of reality." Bartley, *Wittgenstein*, 46.

²³ Thus the assertion that the *Tractatus* set out to answer a Kantian-style question: 'How is language possible?' (A Quinton, "Contemporary British Philosophy", in O'Connor (ed), *A Critical History of Western Philosophy* (New York, The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), 536) does justice only to the dimension in the *Tractatus* devoted to restating Hume's dilemma. For an exposition of the

Yet reinforcing "Hume's fork" is not the same as resolving Hume's dilemma. Indeed where Hume states his dilemma on the basis of an empiricist epistemology, Wittgenstein's resolution rests on matters of pure logic, principally the propositions of logic.²⁴ These latter propositions are in the Wittgensteinian imagination bearers of tautology, autotelism and utter self-sufficiency.²⁵ In that sense they mirror the autonomous safe haven that Wittgenstein finds for philosophy, though paradoxically philosophical speech is dialectically undermined as a result.²⁶

Yet those very same origins of the *Tractatus* - tautology, autotelism and utter self-sufficiency - are quickly usurped by Wittgenstein's distinction between showing and saying,²⁷ which is why he can say to Russell:

main differences between Kant and the *Tractatus*, see Hacker *Insight*, 22f.

²⁴ Though Wittgenstein calls logic "transcendental" he does not mean that the propositions of logic state "transcendental truths, it means that they like other propositions, shew something that pervades everything sayable and is itself unsayable." See Anscombe, *Introduction*, 166.

²⁵ Thus Wittgenstein writes: In logic every proposition is in the form of a proof." Wittgenstein, *TLP* 6.1264. Thus "It always possible to construe logic in such a way that every proposition is its own proof." *Ibid*, 6.1265.

²⁶ "My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognises them as nonsensical, when he has used them - as steps - to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.)

He must transcend these propositions and then he will see the world aright.

Whereof one cannot speak thereof one must be silent." *Ibid*, 6.54-7.

Hacker describes Wittgenstein's attitude here as espousing a conception of philosophy that is negative and dialectical. See Hacker, *Insight*, 24-27.

²⁷ One can cite a number of commentators who take this view. The main objection of Rhees' formidable criticism of the 1st edition of Anscombe's *Introduction* is that Anscombe over-emphasises the purely logical aspects of the *Tractatus* at the expense of the saying and showing distinction, which Rhees asserts is the real centre of the work. See R Rhees, "Miss Anscombe on the *Tractatus*" *Philosophical Quarterly*, 10, (1960), 21-31. M Black describes the concept of 'showing' as crucial. See Black, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's 'Tractatus'* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1964), 190. Griffin notes that the doctrine is not easy to ignore because apart from anything else, Wittgenstein himself claimed it was the main point of the *Tractatus*. See J Griffin, *Wittgenstein's Logical Atomism* (London, Oxford University Press, 1964), 18. The distinction between saying and showing was fundamental in his earlier philosophy. See A Kenny, *Wittgenstein* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1975), 45. Pears concurs with the view that the distinction is an important one. See Pears, *Wittgenstein*, 87. M O Mounce describes it as the central doctrine of the *Tractatus*. See M O Mounce, *Wittgenstein's Tractatus: An Introduction* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1981), 12. Hacker concurs with Rhees' perspective when he writes: "It [the distinction] provides the rationale for the conception of philosophy propounded in the *Tractatus*, in particular, for the view that there are no philosophical propositions, that philosophy does not aim at achieving new

Now I'm afraid that you haven't really got hold of my main contention to which the whole business of logical propositions is only corollary. The main point is the theory of what can be expressed (*gesagt*) by propositions, i.e., by language (and which comes to the same thing, what can be thought) and what cannot be expressed by propositions, but only shown (*gezeigt*); which I believe is the cardinal problem of philosophy.²⁸

This property of logic, namely that it shows its properties, that is, reveals *itself* (logic reveals itself as *logic*), circumvents the accusation that it is merely autolelic though "logic looks after itself".²⁹ In other words, just as "the unutterable is - unutterably - contained", which is to say, revealed, in what is "uttered" then so logic shows itself³⁰ though it cannot be said:³¹

Propositions cannot represent what they must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it - logical form.³²

Propositions cannot represent logical form: it is mirrored in them.

knowledge, that philosophy is not a kind of science. The distinction is held to be vindicated by a variety of strands, interwoven in the argument of the book, namely the bipolarity of the proposition, the picture theory of meaning, the distinction between a name and a variable, a material property and a formal property, a genuine concept and a formal concept." See Hacker, *Insight*, 19. McGuinness writes that the distinction is "a key notion". See McGuinness, *Wittgenstein*, 199. As to its pervasiveness in the *Tractatus*, Black has noted the frequent occurrence of the term *zeigen* 'to show' and its related terms: "Wittgenstein uses the verb 'to show (*zeigen*), or its cognates, very often - there are some forty occurrences in his special sense, to which must be added occasional uses of the near synonyms, *aufweisen* (show forth) and *spiegeln* (mirror). The word *darstellen*, when used in the sense of 'to present', also expresses the same idea." Black, *Companion*, 190.

²⁸ Letter to Russell, 18.8.19. See Wittgenstein, *Letters to Russell, Keynes and Moore* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1974). Anscombe infers that this passage refers to Russell's interest in logical propositions. See Anscombe, *Introduction*, 164. Yet insofar as the distinction between showing and saying can be shown to emerge from Wittgenstein's reflections on the propositions of logic, it may also (if not exclusively) be his own preoccupation with the propositions of logic he speaks of here.

²⁹ Wittgenstein, *TLP* 5.473.

³⁰ It is not we who show logical structure in our use of factual language: it expresses itself. Black conceives of the distinction in this respect as follows: "The intended opposition comes out neatly in a point of diction. It is we, the users of language, who 'say' things, make assertions, by means of the arbitrary coordinations we have assigned to words; but whatever is shown, shows itself (*zeigen ich*, as Wittgenstein often says), independently of any arbitrary conventions we may have adopted - what is shown is not something 'we express' (c.f. 6.124g)" See Black, *Companion*, 190. He is aware that "unhappily Wittgenstein does once or twice use the expression 'we show', in the sense of 'we prove or demonstrate' - as at 6.126" *Ibid*, 190. But he goes on to say: "We can usually see whether Wittgenstein uses, or might as well have used, the reflexive form. For example, the important remark that a proposition shows itself, 4.022a, can be legitimately transformed into a: 'A proposition's sense shows itself in the proposition.'" *Ibid*, 190.

³¹ "What can be shown, cannot be said." Wittgenstein, *TLP* 4.1212.

³² *Ibid*, 4.12

What finds its reflection in language, language cannot represent.
 What expresses itself in language, we cannot express by means of language.
 Propositions show the logical form of reality.
 They display it.³³

That Wittgenstein's solution to Hume's metaphilosophical dilemma originates in the propositions of logic is confirmed by the rationale behind the first recorded expression of the distinction between showing and saying:

Logical so-called propositions show the logical properties of language and therefore of the universe, but say nothing.

This means that by merely looking at them you can see these properties; whereas, in a proposition proper, you cannot see what is true by looking at it.³⁴

In other words: If logical propositions are analytically or tautologically true, then they say nothing about the world. *Ceteris paribus* it follows that the same logical properties manifest in "propositions proper" (factual propositions)³⁵ are not

³³ *Ibid*, 4.121. Black lists a number of things which Wittgenstein says show themselves. He concludes: "Among the things said by Wittgenstein to show themselves are: the sense of a proposition (4.022 a), that a proposition is about a certain object (4.1211 a), that two propositions are about the same object (*Ibid.*), that a given symbol signifies an object (4.126 (3)c), that a given sign signifies a number, that the sign '-' corresponds to nothing in reality (4.0621b), that logical propositions (tautologies and contradictions) say nothing (4.461a), that there is no such thing as a soul (5.5421 a), that two given propositions contradict one another (6.1201 a), that a given proposition follows from another (6.1221), that two expressions have the same meaning (6.23 c)" He summarises Wittgenstein's usage of the term into two categories: "...what shows itself is either (i) something material about the reference or the sense of a given expression (e.g. that it stands for a certain object, for no object, or the same object as some other given expression) or (ii) something about the logical form of the reference or sense (e.g. that it is a number, or a significant proposition, or the contradiction of a given proposition, or a consequence of another proposition.) (If we use 'meaning' to cover both sense and reference, we could say more briefly that what is shown is some feature of either the content or the form of meaning of a given expression.) The second type of case is the more prominent in Wittgenstein's exposition." See Black, *Companion*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1964), 190-191. That each and every meaningful proposition shows its own unique sense but that this sense is cannot be said ("A proposition shows its sense. A proposition shows how things stand if it is true. And it says that they do so stand." (TLP 4.022)) is the most overt *logical* parallel to one of the things that is "unutterably contained" in a poem such as the one by Uhland cited earlier.

³⁴ Wittgenstein, *NB*, 107. That Wittgenstein had not solved the problem of logical constants or provided a solution to the need for a Theory of Types in "Notes on Logic" (a document which charted Wittgenstein's progress up to Autumn 1913) makes it all the more certain that his reflection on the nature of logical propositions constitute the key explanatory variable of the presence of the doctrine of showing and saying in the *Tractatus*.

³⁵ Though "all the propositions of our everyday language, just as they stand are in perfect logical order" (Wittgenstein, TLP 5.5562), their perfect logical order is a hidden order. Accordingly it has to be retrieved by logical analysis of the sort practised by Russell. "All philosophy is a critique of language", writes Wittgenstein, "It was Russell who performed the service of showing that the

the representatives of anything either. We find this idea expressed in the *Tractatus* thus:

My fundamental idea is that the 'logical constants' are not representatives; that there can be no representatives of the logic of facts.³⁶

The German logician Gottlieb Frege had thought the logical particles (the logical connectives of propositional logic ' \rightarrow ' ('if...then...'), '&' ('...and...'), ' \vee ' ('either...or...')³⁷ were names of literal functions: thus 'not' was the name of the concept of negation (which in turn was a unary function); the binary connectives 'and' 'if...then...' were names of relations; and the quantifiers in the predicate calculus were names of second-level functions. These functions themselves were also taken to be names, names of logical objects which existed in a Platonic realm. Russell's answer had been slightly different but tended in the same direction. Science, he argued, had its objects - matter, energy etc - so logic, being another substantive science, must be about some other category of objects. Russell, then, thought of philosophy as a science, differing only from the other sciences in that it was 'the science of the most general', the science of the properties and relations of logical objects. In other words, Frege and Russell thought of the propositions of logic as expressing general (*a priori*) realist truths about logical entities.

apparent logical form of a proposition need not be its real one." *Ibid*, 4.0031. Russell's "service" in this respect was his theory of definite descriptions. This theory proposed that the logical form of the class of sentences possessing the same form as the definite description "The present king of France is bald" was not what it appeared to be when its real logical form was uncovered by logical analysis. According to Russell 'The present king of France is bald' was (in informal and formal predicate calculus notation) reducible to :

- (1) For some x, x is the present king of France
 $(\exists x)(Fx)$
 and (&),
- (2) for all y, if y is bald, y is identical with x,
 $(y)((Gy) \rightarrow (y=x))$
 and (&),
- (3) x is bald (Gx)

In other words, the original proposition is analyzed into a compound of three logically independent propositions, each of which must be true if the original proposition is to be true. The end result of such an analysis is logical form - a logical structure resembling the propositional and predicate calculus. The logical form of a fully analyzed expression consists of a list of elementary propositions: "It is obvious that analysis of propositions must lead us to elementary propositions" *TLP* 4.221.

³⁶ *TLP* 4.0312.

³⁷ There is a useful glossary of the vocabulary of logic in Anscombe, *Introduction*, 21-24.

Wittgenstein early on disagreed with both Frege and Russell. The first philosophical remark of his that has been preserved is in a letter to Russell dated 22 June 1912. In it Wittgenstein starts out as he means to end:

Logic is still in the melting point, but one thing gets clearer: the propositions of logic contain only apparent variables and whatever may turn out to be the proper explanation of apparent variables, its consequence must be that there are no logical constants.

Logic must be completely different than any other science.³⁸

Logic must be completely different from science. It must be *sui generis*. Yet had Wittgenstein adhered to the definition of philosophy formulated in the appendix to the *Notebooks* - philosophy as the *description* of logical form³⁹ - such description would have been one more description assimilable to science and hence to non-philosophy. In other words, Wittgenstein's credentials as a metaphilosophical critic who resolves Hume's dilemma would not have been genuine. Accordingly, logical analysis cannot be a sufficient condition of the autonomy of philosophy (which is not surprising since it is a means of stating Hume's dilemma). In other words, Wittgenstein's demarcation of philosophy from species of non-philosophy

³⁸ Wittgenstein, *Letters*, 10. To the extent that Wittgenstein's resolution of the problem of logical constants led to the resolution (dissolution) of Russell's Theory of Types, one can agree with Griffin's conclusion that the theory of showing and saying is in part a reaction to Frege's *Grundgesetze*, in part a reaction to Russell's Theory of Types, and in part the result of Wittgenstein's own deliberations about the unique character of the propositions of logic. See Griffin, *Atomism*, 9. Indeed, Hacker's four historical 'theses' describe the development of early philosophy:

- (1) Wittgenstein's rejection of logical constants led to his repudiation of any need for Russell's Theory of Types. Hacker *Insight*, 11.
- (2) "[Wittgenstein's] repudiation of the theory of Types played a major role in moulding his conception of the nature and limits of philosophy, from "Notes on Logic" in 1913 to the *Tractatus*.", *Ibid*, 12.
- (3) "The extent to which his conception of philosophy changed can be gauged by comparing the "Notes on Logic" with the *Tractatus*." *Ibid*, 11.
- (4) "The cause of the change can be attributed to the emergence of the distinction between showing and saying." *Ibid*, 12.

³⁹ "In philosophy there are no deductions; it is purely descriptive. The word 'philosophy' ought always to designate something over or under, but not beside, the natural sciences. Philosophy gives no pictures of reality, and can neither confirm nor confute scientific investigations. It consists of logic and metaphysics, the former its basis. Epistemology is the philosophy of psychology. Distrust of grammar is the first requisite for philosophising. Philosophy is the doctrine of logical form of scientific propositions (not primitive propositions only). A correct explanation of the logical propositions must give them a unique position as against all other propositions." Wittgenstein, *NB*, "Appendix I", 93.

follows from the wholesale identification of philosophy with logic as *logic*⁴⁰ establishing a genuine philosophical realm.⁴¹

Philosophy is not one of the natural sciences.

(The word "philosophy" must mean something whose place is above or below the natural sciences, not beside them.)

Philosophy aims at the logical clarification of thoughts.

Philosophy is not a body of doctrine but an activity.

A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations.

Philosophy does not result in 'philosophical propositions', but rather in the clarification of propositions.

Without philosophy thoughts are, as it were, cloudy and indistinct: its task is to make them clear and to give them sharp boundaries.⁴²

And on the specific sciences that constitute the natural sciences he goes on:

Psychology is no more closely related to philosophy than any other natural science.⁴³

Also:

Darwin's theory has no more to do with philosophy than any other hypothesis in natural science.⁴⁴

And:

Philosophy sets limits to the much disputed sphere of natural science.⁴⁵

Pears writes that all Wittgenstein's philosophy "expresses his strong feeling

⁴⁰ In 1912 Wittgenstein presented a paper entitled "What is Philosophy?". In it he attempted to argue for the thesis that philosophy is to be identified entirely with logic. (Indeed, in the later "Notes on Logic" he represents himself as a logician and not at all as a philosopher in the classical sense.) See McGuinness, *Wittgenstein*, 144.

⁴¹ In the *Tractatus* neither logical form or the sense of a proposition are nonsense but they lack sense; they are *sinnlos* but not *insinnig*, which is to say neither can be brought in under the wraps of our language to the realm of apprehensability. This makes for a fundamental distinction in the *Tractatus* between talk about something and that which we talk about. It is talk about logic which is meaningless, but not the logical form or the sense of a proposition itself. This puts it on a different plane altogether from Russell's Theory of Types, perhaps the most perfect example of a philosophical theory Wittgenstein could have cited during his *Tractatus* period. Talk about the Theory of Types is nonsense because the Theory of Types is nonsense, albeit disguised philosophical nonsense. (It is nonsense both because it talks nonsense about logic and because it attempts to talk about that which we cannot talk in the first place.) In other words, talk about logic is nonsense, not because logic is nonsense but because it is such that it cannot be talked about. See Hacker, *Insight*, 18.

⁴² Wittgenstein, *TLP* 4.111-4.112.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 4.1121.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 4.1122.

⁴⁵ Wittgenstein, *TLP* 4.113.



that the great danger to philosophy to which modern thought is exposed is domination by science."⁴⁶ Wittgenstein certainly saw it this way. In a remark from the draft to the preface to the later posthumously published *Philosophical Remarks* he wrote:

... I have no sympathy for the current of European civilisation and do not understand its goals. [...] It is all one to me whether the typical western scientist understands or appreciates my work, since he will not in any case understand the spirit in which I write. Our civilisation is characterised by the word 'progress'.⁴⁷

It would be a neat answer to say that the tide against which Wittgenstein swam was the tide of science. But it was not as simple as that. Wittgenstein was not against science in itself. He maintained a life-long interest in engineering, in the construction and development of new technology, in the functional principles of all kinds of machinery. He had at one time contemplated becoming an engineer and during his time at Manchester in the years 1908-11 attempted to make contributions at the then experimental stages of aeronautical engineering. He did however think that mankind had misread the implications of scientific and technological progress. "By its very nature progress always seems greater than it actually is" was the epigram he chose as the motto of the *Philosophical Investigations*. While progress was perfectly acceptable in itself, what was not was the implication that in virtue of its undeniable success in its own field it was the final adjudicator on all areas of human life, including philosophy. This was what Wittgenstein found unacceptable.

III. "Wittgenstein's Vienna."

Thus that the central ideas of the *Tractatus* were conceived through reflection on logic is not in the least irreconcilable⁴⁸ with the fact that the history of its publication reveals Wittgenstein viewed the work as an ethical deed continuous with

⁴⁶ Pears, *The False Prison. A Study of the Development of Wittgenstein's Philosophy*, vol 2, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987), 221. Pears gives a perceptive account of the nature of Wittgenstein's antipathy to the encroachment of science on philosophy. *Ibid*, 199-225. See also Pears, *Wittgenstein*, 1971.

⁴⁷ Wittgenstein, *CV*, 6.

⁴⁸ Thus Stern writes that there is no "dual" Wittgenstein: no Wittgenstein the rigorously "scientific" Anglo-Saxon logician or Wittgenstein the Austrian or Continental philosopher with "mystical" leanings. See Stern, "Wittgenstein in Context", 150.

the preoccupations of some of the outstanding figures of Viennese culture during the last twenty-five to thirty years of Habsburg Austria.⁴⁹ *Inter alia*, the preoccupations of this culture revolved round a critique of the shortcomings of Habsburg Viennese society. In this respect, it was a critique that found its most vociferous voice in the work of Karl Kraus. Kraus's life-long mission was embodied in a journal called *Die Fackel*.⁵⁰ Just as Kierkegaard before him had lambasted "*bourgeois* Copenhagen"

⁴⁹ The *Tractatus* is a text that cannot be fully understood simply by looking at what is in it. Otherwise one would be committed to rejecting the most convincing explanation behind the history of Wittgenstein's attempt to publish it, namely that he identified the *Tractatus* with the work of certain key *cultural* figures of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna and not with a *scientific* Austrian philosophical tradition. The first publisher to whom Wittgenstein submitted the *Tractatus* was the firm which published Karl Kraus. It was rejected. Wittgenstein was prompted to write a letter to Engelmann, part of which is quoted below:

"Today I received notification from Jahoda that he cannot publish my treatise. Allegedly for technical reasons. But I would dearly like to know what Kraus said about it. If there were an opportunity for you to find out, I should be very glad. Perhaps Loos knows something about it." Letter dated 25.10.18, Engelmann, *Letters*, 15.

Although it was extremely unlikely the literary Kraus would have thought the *Tractatus* dealt with his own cultural preoccupations, it is difficult to see Wittgenstein's desire that Kraus should see it in any other light than that he thought it dealt with matters close to Kraus's heart. The second publisher Wittgenstein approached published the work of Otto Weininger, a fellow Viennese, whose work Wittgenstein respected. Wittgenstein later said that this was the reason he had made the approach. This second attempt came to nothing. See Janik, "Wittgenstein: an Austrian Enigma", 80. The third attempt involved a professor in Germany who has been identified as Frege. (Von Wright, "The Origin of the *Tractatus*", *Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 80. What stands out from this encounter is Wittgenstein's reaction to the conditions of publication. Frege was prepared to publish the book as long as Wittgenstein rewrote it in the form of a treatise. For Wittgenstein this was nothing less than to 'mutilate' the work so important did he consider the form in which he had written the *Tractatus* to the point of the book. Janik, "Wittgenstein: an Austrian Enigma", 80. The fourth and final attempt Wittgenstein made in person was to Karl Von Ficker. Von Ficker was the editor of the periodical *Der Brenner* of which Karl Kraus had said: "That the only honest review in Austria appears in Innsbruck, should be known in Germany, if not in Austria, because the only honest review in Germany appears there too." *Ibid*, 83. *Der Brenner* was also known for its defence of Kraus. *Ibid*, 82. Wittgenstein for his part seems to have selected Von Ficker because of the things Kraus had said about him. *Ibid*, 83. Janik sums up the reception of the *Tractatus* as follows:

"The reception of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* in Austria presents a paradox: those Austrians who considered himself to be his disciples interpreted his work in a manner that Wittgenstein himself considered unacceptable, while those intellectuals with whom he identified himself in his own time could neither appreciate or understand the *Tractatus*." *Ibid*, 75.

In other words, the very people whom Wittgenstein hoped would see the true message of the *Tractatus* only succeeded in adding a final ironical twist to the history of the assimilation of the *Tractatus* to the tradition of Austrian scientific positivistic philosophy.

⁵⁰ Sources for Kraus are: W A Iggers, *Karl Kraus: a Viennese Critic of the Twentieth Century* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1967); H Zohn, *Karl Kraus* (New York, Twayne Publishers, 1971). For a more general history in which Kraus is a central character see: Field, *The Last Days of*

with his street pamphlet *The Instant* then so from 1899 onwards Kraus engaged in an unrelenting attack on - and exposure of - what he perceived as the duplicity, hypocrisy and corruption at the heart of Viennese society. Kraus's ethical personality has been likened to an Old Testament prophet, a "Jeremiah"⁵¹; his artistic personality has been described as an "apocalyptic satirist".⁵² In truth, the ethical and the artistic were fused in the one man who accordingly evaded classification into the standard literary or artistic categories of Impressionist, Expressionist, Social Realist, etc. Since for Kraus what mattered in art as in life was integrity or ethical wholeness and not the particular art-form in which it was cast, his artistic standards transcended artistic allegiances.⁵³ Thus Kraus's place in the history of Austrian Expressionism 1890-1914 is not as straightforward as, say, Schiele's or Kokoschka's. Indeed Kraus, like Wittgenstein, looked back to the *GoetheZeit* as the golden age of artistic achievement and to this extent shared Wittgenstein's aesthetic conservatism.

Correlatively, it could be said of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* that while it itself did not engage these shortcomings on the very streets of Vienna as did Kraus's polemics, it articulated, both in its form and content, an ethical-philosophical blueprint that did justice to Krausian polemics.⁵⁴

It is the following passage from a letter which Wittgenstein wrote to Ficker in October 1919 which casts light on what Wittgenstein intended by the *Tractatus*:

The book's point is an ethical one. I once meant to include in the preface a

Mankind: Karl Kraus and his Vienna (London, St. Martin's Press, 1967); A Janik and S Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, (London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1973).

⁵¹ Janik and Toulmin, *Vienna*, 67.

⁵² Timms, *Karl Kraus, Apocalyptic Satirist: Culture and Catastrophe in Habsburg Vienna* (New haven, Yale University Press, 1986).

⁵³ Janik and Toulmin, *Vienna*, 80.

⁵⁴ In 1931 Wittgenstein noted down a list of the names of those whom he believed had influenced him. To some extent it also informs us how much he thought he owed to his influences:

"I don't believe I have ever invented a line of thinking. I have simply straightaway seized on it with enthusiasm for my work of clarification. That is how Boltzmann, Hertz, Schopenhauer, Frege, Russell, Kraus, Loos, Weininger, Spengler, Sraffa have influenced me." Wittgenstein, *CV*, 19.

sentence that is not in fact there now but which I will write for you here for it will be perhaps a key to the work for you. What I then meant to write, then, was this: My work consists of two parts: the one presented here plus all I have not written. And it is precisely this second part that is the important one. My book draws limits to the sphere of the ethical from the inside as it were, and I am convinced this is the ONLY rigorous way of drawing these limits. In short, I believe that where many others are just gassing, I have managed in my book to put everything into place by being silent about it.⁵⁵

And earlier on in the same letter Wittgenstein made the following revealing comment:

For the present I will only say this much: the work is strictly philosophical and at the same time literary: but there's no gassing in it.⁵⁶

The objective of the *Tractatus* coincided with that of Kraus's to the extent that, like Kraus, Wittgenstein was concerned with the integrity and wholeness of a statement rather than the effect it had on the hearer. Hence there was on the one hand the autonomy or *sui generis* identity of the statement and on the other hand the implicit critique of language that failed to satisfy this criterion. For Kraus the most conspicuous failure in this respect was that of the Viennese Press, one of *Die Fackel's* main targets. As Stern has written of Kraus:

Gradually, after 1905, it is borne in upon him that language - that is, the way a statement is made - bears within itself all the signs he needs to understand the ethical quality of that statement and of him that made it. Conversely, it is necessary to read a statement in a way that it supremely sensitive to all its linguistic qualities, in order to discover the truth.⁵⁷

Here it is the object - the statement - that is of primary importance to Kraus. He inveighed against the tendency to make everything subject to the criterion of effect, especially where truth was handed over to, and hence compromised by, the lie. His objection to technology was based on the same rationale. He objected to its invasion of nature, of progress invading nature, of it failing to remain within its own realm. Just as Wittgenstein objected to a culture pervaded and swamped by science then so Kraus objected to the invasion of nature by technology. Hence when the Great War came, he viewed it as an invasion of nature (and man) by the destructive

⁵⁵ Quoted in von Wright, "Origin", 83.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 81.

⁵⁷ Stern, "Karl Kraus's Vision of Language", *Modern Language Review* (1966), 73-74.

weapons of war.⁵⁸

Kraus was one of a brilliant galaxy of stars who populated Vienna just at a time when Habsburg Austria's own star was about to be extinguished in the cataclysm that was the First World War. There was Kraus, but also Adolf Loos, Arnold Schoenberg, Robert Musil, Rainer Maria Rilke, Sigmund Freud, Egon Schiele, Oscar Kokoschka. The two that stood closest to Kraus were Loos and

⁵⁸ E Timms, *Kraus*, 149. Thus it was that when the Great War came, it constituted for Barth the most terrible metaphor for the translation of theology into non-theology. Barth's reaction to the war is both well-known and well documented. He was totally against it. The German theological establishment was in the main not. And to Barth's dismay, he discovered most of the names of his own theological teachers on the manifesto issued by ninety-three intellectuals in support of the Kaisers' war policy. On the very day the First World War broke out

ninety three German intellectuals issued a terrible manifesto, identifying themselves before all the world with the war policy of Kaiser Wilhelm the Second and Chancellor Bethmann-Holweg. For me it was almost worse than the violation of Belgian neutrality. And to my dismay, among the signatories I discovered almost all my German teachers (with the honourable exception of Martin Rade). Quoted in Busch, *Barth*, 81.

As Barth put it, it "was like the twilight of the gods when I saw the reaction of Harnack, Herrmann, Rade, Eucken and company to the new situation". Barth discovered how religion and scholarship could be changed completely into "intellectual 42cm cannons". Quoted in Busch, *Barth*, 81. As a result Barth did not know what to make of "the teaching of all my theological masters in Germany. To me they seemed to have been hopelessly compromised by what I regarded as their failure in the face of the ideology of war." Their "ethical failure" indicated that "their exegetical and dogmatic presuppositions could not be in order". Quoted in Busch, *Barth*, 81. Thus "a whole world of exegesis, ethics, dogmatics, and preaching, which I had hitherto held to as essentially trustworthy, was shaken to the foundations, and with it, all the other writings of the German theologians." Barth, *Schleiermacher*, 264. The war is perceived as the most appalling *reductio ad absurdum* of theology to non-theology: thus the translation of theology into 42cm cannons. Standing amidst the scene of this appalling hermeneutic of death and destruction, Barth did not miss what was now in retrospect the oddly prophetic voice of Overbeck:

"Do the modern theologians think that they can put us off much longer with their absurd delusion that Christianity's best defence to insure its continued existence is its unlimited capacity for change?" Barth quoting Overbeck, "Unsettled Questions for Theology Today", 69.

And if von Clausewitz was not wholly wrong in saying that diplomacy is only war by other means, then, most ominously of all:

"Moses, Christ, Paul, and Luther are still given a place in world history, but only as a kind of ornamentation for display in public exhibitions But at the bottom of their hearts they are the best of "believers in new things" and their master is Bismarck. Barth quoting Overbeck, *Ibid*, 69-70.

In fact, Overbeck's oddly prophetic voice is not odd at all: it is only the voice of an inspired metatheological critic who has witnessed the first stage of the eventual translation, pending Bismarck's dismissal from office by Wilhelm II, of theology into 42cm cannons.

Schoenberg.⁵⁹ The architecture of Loos and the music of Schoenberg were intimately and consciously related to, and even extensions of, the critique of language and society conducted by Kraus. But more fundamentally - and in this the three are to be distinguished both from the merely "languorous aestheticism" of Vienna and the alienated and *angst*-ridden elements of German expressionistic art-forms -⁶⁰ the rationale behind their respective critiques can be traced to a positive (though not positivistic and indeed anti-positivistic) aspiration to resolve Hume's dilemma transposed, as it were, to their respective fields.⁶¹

⁵⁹ "Kraus's insistence that he is trying to effect by a polemical analysis of grammar and language, the same "creative separation" between the sphere of reason (or fact) and that of fantasy (or value) as Adolf Loos was doing in his critique of bourgeois Viennese taste, by distinguishing merely functional artifacts from genuine objets d'art, should be taken quite literally." Janik and Toulmin, *Vienna*, 89. On the cover of Kraus's copy of *The Theory of Harmony* Schoenberg wrote: "I have learned more from you, perhaps than a man should learn, if he wants to remain independent." On Loos Kraus wrote: "Adolf Loos and I - he literally and I grammatically - have done nothing more than show that there is an essential distinction between an urn and a chamber pot and that it is this distinction that above all provides culture with elbow room." *Ibid*, 89.

⁶⁰ E Lunn distinguishes quite correctly between, on the one hand, the "languorous aestheticism" of Vienna, and, on the other, the "nervous, agitated and suffering" art produced by German expressionism. See E Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1982), 58.

⁶¹ Thus that the *Tractatus* cannot be assimilated to the expressionist movement of the first two decades of the twentieth century is of no of material importance to the thesis. What is that Kraus, Loos and Schoenberg all participate in an attempt to restate the Enlightenment legacy, all continue to look back. Expressionism was a movement whose ethos was one of revolt from the bourgeois ethos prevailing at the close of the nineteenth century. (Thus just as the second half of the nineteenth century recapitulated the positivism of Hume then so expressionism with its emphasis on solitariness of the individual alienated from society was a recapitulation of Romanticism.) Wittgenstein did not embrace this revolt: if anything he thought it a further disintegration from, and deterioration of, the great culture that had come to an end by the end of first half of the nineteenth century. In other words, it was a critique of bourgeois society and aesthetic that was itself badly in need of critique. Thus in the words of McGuinness, he was a "stranger to young Vienna". McGuinness, *Wittgenstein*, 33. During the First World War, at a time when Wittgenstein was stationed at the Eastern Front, he received two works by Albert Ehrenstein, a then contemporary and expressionist writer. Wittgenstein's reaction was undisguisedly hostile. In a letter to Paul Engelmann he wrote:

"I received from Zurich two books by Albert Ehrenstein - the one who used to write in *Die Fackel* (once I helped him financially without really wanting to). Now he returns the favour by sending me his 'Tubutsch' and 'Man Screams'. It's just muck if I'm not mistaken. And such stuff is sent to me out here! Please send me as an antidote, Goethe's poems, the second volume, which has the *Venetian Epigrams*, the *Elegies*, and the *Epistles*! Also Morike's poems." Letter to Paul Engelmann 31.3.17 in Engelmann *Letters*, 4.

Wittgenstein's scathingly expressed distaste is not simply the reaction of a man who, in the midst of war, longed for something other than the aesthetic of expressionist angst. His judgement was rather, as Paul Engelmann put it some half a century later, "a judgement on an entire literary epoch,

Transposed to the sphere of Adolf Loos, such an aspiration embodied as it was in his aesthetic theories of architecture and design, inevitably opposed the canons of late nineteenth-century popular taste⁶² on the grounds that art as *art* was being sacrificed on the altar of impressionistic and therefore positivistic "good taste". In opposition to the practice of ornamenting articles of every day use, a practice obliterating the essential distinction between an *objet d'art* and a purely functional item, Loos in his architecture "desired to eliminate all forms of decoration from functional items He put this notion into effect himself by designing buildings that entirely lacked the conventional elaborate facade."⁶³ Once again art and non-art stood as unsynthesizable thesis and antithesis such that the assimilation of the former into the realm of the latter was to be resisted at all costs.

Arnold Schoenberg, his music and the ideas underlying it, Schoenberg not merely as musicologist, but as metamusical critic, extended Kraus's polemic into yet another domain of the cultural life of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna just as Loos had done in architecture. Schoenberg saw clearly that Viennese society demanded in music conformity to conventional tastes, elaboration of orchestration, and perhaps the most damaging demand of all: conformity to the principle that music was to be measured by the effects it produced in the listener. For Schoenberg the central question was whether music was "self-sufficient" - that is, a coherent assemblage of sounds, and a language unto itself - or whether it was essential for it to express ideas or feelings - that is, to express something other than the musical and thus be assimilated to the realm of the subjective.⁶⁴

on what was then proclaimed as expressionism." *Ibid*, 85. The antidote Wittgenstein seeks to counter expressionist disequilibrium and instability is the classical beauty, serenity and simplicity of the classics of German literature. As Engelmann puts it Wittgenstein asks for the "most severely classical verse of Goethe and Morike." He "draws on the purest well of classical German poetry." *Ibid*, 86.

⁶² Janik and Toulmin, *Vienna*, 93-4.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 93.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 103-5. Wittgenstein too in his remark on Schumann implicitly dissociates himself from the music of the second half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the origins of Schoenberg's question - whether music was "self-sufficient" or should express other than itself, ideas or feelings - can be traced to this period. At the time there were two opposing camps on this issue, the music of Brahms representing one school of thought and Wagner the other. That Brahms was regarded as an exponent

Schoenberg defended his so-called "atonal" music - while disavowing the term - against those who attacked it for its dissonance, by reminding them that the musically untutored had similarly attacked all the classical Viennese composers, whom they considered to be writing dissonant monstrosities. But Haydn and Mozart did not write for the "untutored" and never aimed at "sounding good":

To be musical means to have an ear in the *musical* sense, not in the *natural* sense. A musical ear must have assimilated the tempered scale. And a singer who produces natural pitches is unmusical, just as someone who acts "naturally" in the street may be immoral.⁶⁵

In other words, Schoenberg perceived himself to be taking the music of the first Viennese school to its logical conclusion. His objective was nothing other than to eliminate all traces of the natural to leave behind pure *sui generis* music. Music was now to be itself completely and exclusively - it was not to be a function of anything else, not the natural ear (not nature), and not demeaned for the sake of effect. Schoenberg then shared another quality with Kraus, Loos and Wittgenstein. If he was a revolutionary at all, then he was a conservative revolutionary. His objection to the music of the second half of the nineteenth century was that it, unlike the music of the classical Viennese school, had succumbed to the criterion of effect.⁶⁶ Schoenberg on the other hand claimed time and time again that he was

of *sui generis* music would have made sense to Wittgenstein since for him Brahms was the last representative of the first Viennese school. See McGuinness, *Wittgenstein*, 19f. In contrast, Wagner is never viewed as such for the reason that his music fails the autonomy criterion. As McGuinness perceptively puts it: according to Wittgenstein, Wagner "was an imitator of Beethoven and in him Beethoven's terrible or cosmic irony had become earthly and *bourgeois*" *Ibid*, 56. More than anything else, it is the programmatic element in Wagner to which Wittgenstein is sensitive. As McGuinness puts it: "Perhaps we can read something more into his critical remark - that we cannot translate word for word from one language in to another. ... the literary goals, the message desired are too mechanically rendered in music by Wagner: a move away this from Wittgenstein's youthful identification with the *Meistersingers* and a move toward an inexpressive art, where what matters is not what is said but how it is said." *Ibid*, 272.) As Wittgenstein puts it himself: "where Genius wears thin, skill may show through (Overture to the *Meistersingers*)." Wittgenstein, *CV*, 43. The skill in question is precisely the skill of the human, the creator who fails to remove himself from his work of art and had therefore compromised the identity of art.

⁶⁵ Janik and Toulmin, *Vienna*, 111.

⁶⁶ Indeed there is no better spokesman for Schoenberg's (and Wittgenstein's) aesthetic ideal than the Abbé in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (bk viii, ch 7):

"Most people treat finished works of art as though there are made of putty. According to their own preferences, prejudices and whims, they would have the chiselled marble remodelled, massive walls pulled out or in; a painting must teach,

only working through in a strictly logical fashion the purely musical ideas of Bach, Mozart and Beethoven. Accordingly, all his compositions can be viewed as attacks on the pseudo-sophistication of *bourgeois* aestheticism.⁶⁷ (In fact, when viewed as a whole the positivist aesthetic ethos of the second half of the nineteenth century is a recapitulation of Hume's aesthetic in the eighteenth century and constitutes one more reason why it is erroneous to assimilate Wittgenstein to a Humean tradition if he can be assimilated to Schoenberg.)⁶⁸

Thus the clash between on the one hand Wittgenstein, Kraus, Loos and Schoenberg and on the other the dominant cultural and social tendencies of Central Europe toward the end of the nineteenth century was essentially a clash between a unique form of objectivism and a ubiquitous subjectivism. One was the culture whose aesthetic criterion was decorativeness and effect such that it amounted to a superficial sensationalism where art was reduced to the sensations it evoked. The other took its point of departure from the external object in that it followed on from the autonomy of the object in question. Thus what separates them from the second half of the nineteenth century also separates them from the subjectivism at the heart of the German Expressionist movement.

IV. Barth as Metatheological Critic: *Romans* II and Overbeck's Dilemma.

Paul's letter to the Romans is by common consensus one of the greatest New Testament writings. Of all the Pauline epistles it has more often than not been Romans that has had the greatest impact, even on its most theologically

a drama edify, and everything must be anything but what it is. [...] They reduce it all to what they call effect and everything is relative to their own feeling and taste." Quoted in E M Wilkinson, *Goethe's Conception of Form*, (London, Oxford University Press, 1951), 191.

⁶⁷ Janik and Toulmin, *Vienna*, 111-112.

⁶⁸ In a section entitled "Taste and The Trend Toward Subjectivism", Cassirer writes: "Thus taste is no longer classified with the logical processes of inference and conclusion [as in the earlier Cartesian Geometric paradigm] but placed on a par with the immediacy of the pure acts of perception - with seeing and hearing, tasting and smelling. This transition has now brought us to the way which Hume follows through to its logical conclusion." Cassirer, *Enlightenment*, 304-5.

accomplished readers (as was attested by Augustine, Luther and John Wesley). In other words, the response the epistle demanded could not be contained within, and indeed transcended, assimilation to the ordinary canons of 'grammarian' scholarship,

This was no less true of Barth modern as he was. To say that Barth's commentary on Paul's letter to the Romans "remains the greatest Pauline study of our time" overestimates the extent to which it was a study at all.⁶⁹ This is above all true of the second of the two commentaries Barth wrote on Romans. Where the first manifested "knowledge in the mode of contemplation",⁷⁰ knowledge of a "relatively secure contemplative subject",⁷¹ the second is replete with a self subject to (dialectical) fragmentation. This has led scholars to reconstitute *Romans* II as a theological postmodernity thematically coincident with the expressionist movement that undoubtedly formed part of its cultural *milieu*.⁷²

That *Romans* II shares characteristics in common with Spengler's *Decline of the West*, Ernst Bloch's *Geist der Utopie* (1918), Karl Jasper's *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*, Graf Keyserling's *Reise-Tagebuch eines Philosophen*, Theodore Lessing's *Geschichte als Sinngebung des Sinnlosen* (History as giving meaning to the meaningless (1919) Leopold Ziegler's *Gestaltwandel der Götter* (1920), Max Brod's *Heidentum, Judentum, Christendom* (1921), Ludwig Klage's *Vom kosmogonischen Eros* (1922), Sigmund Freud's *The I and the Id*, Fritz Mauthner's *Der Atheismus und seine Geschichte im Abendlande* (1923) - that *Romans* II shares characteristics in common with some or of all of these books cannot be gainsaid.⁷³ Yet neither *Romans* II nor Barth's theology can be understood properly inside this

⁶⁹ P Minear, *The Obedience of Faith: The Purposes of Paul in the Epistle to the Romans* (London, SCM Press Ltd, 1971), ix.

⁷⁰ R H Roberts, "Barth and the Eschatology of Weimar: A Theology on its Way?", *A Theology on its Way? Essays on Karl Barth* (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1991), 193.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 192.

⁷² *Ibid*, 184-185.

⁷³ I am indebted to J C O'Neill, *The Bible's Authority. A Portrait Gallery of Thinkers from Lessing to Bultmann* (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1991), 227-278 for bringing this list of books to my attention. Roberts has also argued the affinity between *Romans* II and Bloch's work.

context.⁷⁴

Though in *Romans II* Barth will use a language that shares in the expressionistic art-forms of the time,⁷⁵ it is not as in the case of the expressionists in order to respond "the times". To be sure, there are themes coinciding with the expressionist spirit of the times - nihilism (annihilation), the shattering of *bourgeois* reality etc.,⁷⁶ but to emphasise an expressionist dimension participating in *angst* and alienation in relation to a decadent bourgeois society is to assimilate *Romans II* to a specific Romantic (and hence post-modern) tradition that is finally not appropriate. It is to confuse the literary means with the theological end, the form in

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 278.

⁷⁵ Even so, it is possible to view the "expressionist" literary style of *Romans II* - a combination of hyperbole (Nietzsche) and irony (Kierkegaard) as more or less continuous with Barth's "dialectical meanderings". See S H Webb, *Re-Figuring Theology: The Rhetoric of Karl Barth* (New York, University of New York, 1991), Once again, we are back with Overbeck's dilemma.

⁷⁶ See K-J Kuschel, *Born Before All Time? The Dispute over Christ's Origin*, translated by John Bowden, (London, SCM Press, 1992), 68-81; R H Roberts, "Barth and the Eschatology of Weimar: A Theology on its Way?", 193. To be sure, as Kuschel notes, (*Born*, 81), Barth declared that "[h]owever strong our aversion may be to the work of the modern expressionists, it is more than clear that for these men the chief concern is the essence, the content, the referring of the beautiful to life's unity, in contrast to that *art for its own sake* which prevailed during the last generation, but which, after all, can cite precedent with certainty in neither Raphael or Dürer." Barth, "The Christian's Place in Society", *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, translated by D Horton, (New York, Harper, 1957), 292. Yet though this is the testimony of a man who thought more of expressionist art than that which Schoenberg scorned as *bourgeois* aestheticism, it is certainly not a whole-hearted approval of expressionism. Indeed, late in his life Barth, speaking specifically of literature, was to admit to the poet Carl Zuckmayer that on reading a novel from the modernist tradition he could not make head or tail of it: "I am unfortunately a child of the nineteenth century and there is nothing I can do about it." C Zuckmayer, *A Late Friendship, the Letters of Barl Barth and Carl Zuckmayer*, translated by G W Bromiley, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1983), 1. Indeed, his attitude toward modernity mirrored Wittgenstein's. Barth like Wittgenstein admitted he could not understand its language. In 1956 a pianist and musicologist friend of Barth's had attempted in vain to make him interested in Paul Hindemith. In a letter Barth wrote to a friend in 1963 he conceded that

"unfortunately I simply cannot make sense of any modern art (in all three of its forms). I am in no position to pass a negative judgement, which is why I don't think I have ever said a bad word against it. But it is a sad fact that I have no understanding of it, no eye or ear for it. Perhaps I shall discover in heaven what is so hidden from me now. But it is lamentable that it has not happened to me yet."
Quoted in Busch, *Barth*, 411

To be sure, where Wittgenstein seems to have dismissed modern art forms out of hand, Barth located the problem in himself rather than as Wittgenstein did, in the art!

which the content is expressed with the content itself.⁷⁷

That Barth summarised the contents of the commentary in terms of "what Kierkegaard called 'the infinite qualitative distinction' between time and eternity"⁷⁸ cannot be gainsaid. Yet Barth's encounter with Overbeck - the undoubted catalyst between *Romans I* and *Romans II*⁷⁹ - is not a means to a Kierkegaardian end. (*Romans II* is not a species of theological subjectivism.)⁸⁰ Barth is quite clear about the sense in which Overbeck is a catalyst. In the second preface to *Romans*, Barth refers to "the warning addressed by Overbeck to all theologians." He continues:

This warning I have first applied to myself, and then directed upon the enemy. Whether I have dealt at all adequately with the questions raised by this eminent and pious man I must leave to the judgement of those who are able to perceive the nature of the riddle [*das Rätsel*] he has formulated so precisely, and are willing to attempt at least its solution. To the judgement of men like Eberhardt Vischer I cannot submit myself! He sees in the riddle no more than a biographical and

⁷⁷ It is noteworthy that Roberts makes such a case for *Romans II* in an essay in which no reference is made to Overbeck. Roberts, "Barth and the Eschatology of Weimar", 169-199. Yet Barth wrote "Unsettled Questions for Theology" between writing his first and second commentaries on Paul's letter to the Romans. Indeed, it was his encounter with Overbeck that precipitated writing the second commentary. See McCormack, "Scholastic", 74-75, 143-144. Moreover, the expressionist influence that prevailed between the autumn of 1921 and the summer of 1921 (the period in which Barth wrote *Romans II*, Busch, *Barth*, 118) was as strong if not stronger during the period in which *Romans I* was written. This begs the question why the expressionist ('dialectical') style was not utilised in *Romans I*. Roberts himself demonstrates just this difference when he shows how *Romans II*'s exegesis of 8.24-5 differs from that of *Romans I*. *Ibid*, 191-196. The explanation is that the expressionist style was brought in with the eschatological theme, which in turn was due to Barth's encounter with Overbeck's dilemma.

⁷⁸ Barth, "Preface to the Second Edition", *CR II*, 10.

⁷⁹ One could argue that when Barth encountered Overbeck he realised that Overbeck had articulated the problem far more precisely than he had when he wrote *Romans I*. And since *Romans I* did not deal adequately with Overbeck's "riddle", he rewrote *Romans I*. This is why Barth could say that where *Romans I* "had been written in a still very nebulous and speculative form" ... the second edition ... presented the reader with 'sharply contoured antitheses' ... 'I think I am a *bit* nearer the truth of the matter than before.' Busch, *Barth*, 118. Again: "... the second edition represented much more clearly than the first bold attempt to introduce a theology 'which may be better than that of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth in that it is concerned quite simply with God' *Ibid*, 119.

⁸⁰ Thus as McCormack shows, Barth's concern in his use of dialectic is to "guard the divine subjectivity not human subjectivity. Barth's first concern is divine freedom, not human freedom. So much so is this the case in *Romans II* that Barth ... interprets the Either-Or in a way that pushes him in Hegel's direction, not Kierkegaard's ... he is not interested in how we become Christians; he is interested in the problem of how God can reveal Himself without ceasing to be God." McCormack, "Scholastic", 126-7.

psychological problem.⁸¹

Unless one perceives that first and foremost *Romans* II is a response to Overbeck's "riddle", one will not go very far in understanding *Romans* II. It is Overbeck's riddle that Barth addresses in "Unsettled Questions for Theology Today". But the identity of this riddle, as chapter 1 has demonstrated, is the metatheological dilemma. Therefore it follows that the identity of the riddle *Romans* II attempts to "solve" is also the metatheological dilemma.⁸²

It is thus that *Romans* II must be understood. To repeat: Barth is a metatheological critic whose blue-print for the possibility of theology "in and for itself" is the life-long proclamation "God is *God*". 'God is *God*' is the blue-print for a *sui generis* theological realm belonging to theology "in and for itself". In that sense it is a blue-print for theological truth. As the guarantee of theological truth, 'God is *God*' entails the possibility of theology "in and for itself" and the existence of theology entails 'God is *God*'.

Eberhard Busch writes that: "There are those who believe that to his very end Barth repeated only 'God is God'. But as time went on, another aspect is claimed to have been more characteristic of his theology, namely its *Christocentrism*. That view is not altogether false."⁸³ In opposition to the somewhat stronger thesis that the later Christocentric presence *overcame* Barth's earlier 'God is *God*' theology,⁸⁴ Busch counters with the assertion that "The theological principle not only does NOT exclude the later Christocentric theology but was *and* remained its *premise*, a premise which neither dropped nor even corrected the basic structure of the

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 3-4. Barth described Vischer, later a colleague at Basel, as "a sturdy embodiment of the extraordinary academic spirit to be found at the end of the nineteenth century." Quoted in Busch, *Barth*, 268.

⁸² The second preface in which Barth uses the term *das Rätsel* is dated September 1921. It is not a term he uses in the essay "Unsettled Questions for Theology Today" written in the early part of 1920. Busch, *Barth*, 115. One can surmise that when Barth spoke of *das Rätsel* in the later preface he had further interpreted what he had written in his essay on Overbeck in terms of "Overbeck's riddle for theology".

⁸³ Busch, "God is God: The Meaning of a Controversial Formula and the Fundamental Problem of Speaking About God", *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 7 (1986), 102.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 102.

principle."⁸⁵ But Barth as a Christian theologian was a Christocentric theologian before the *Church Dogmatics*. He was in fact a Christocentric theologian in *Romans II*. Indeed as McCormack writes: "What [Christocentricity] meant was all theological knowledge was derived from God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ. This was already true in *Romans II*."⁸⁶ Hence if 'God is *God*' is a blue-print for the earlier theology, Christocentricity is no bar to it being present with the same force in the later theology. Whether Christocentrism became more characteristic (in the precise sense of the term) is not the issue here. Indeed, as will be seen, 'God is *God*' is no less apparent in the later work. In that sense, Barth did repeat 'God is *God*' to the very end.

The affirmation of a blue-print for *sui generis* theological truth then is finally the issue at stake and the rationale behind the proclamation 'God is *God*' in *Romans II*.⁸⁷ Barth the lone prophetic theological voice of the time puts Paul's letter to the Romans to distinctly theological use. It was as he put it "a bomb dropped into the playground of the theologians".⁸⁸ *Romans II* constitutes both a blue-print for *sui generis* theology and proceeds to propound an eschatological instantiation of it. It is surely right to say that "crisis" as Barth understood it "was always first and foremost *theological*."⁸⁹ That is, Barth responds to a crisis that had been in perpetual motion, so to speak, since even before Overbeck, since Hume.

Prima facie, assimilating the cacophonous chord of discord struck by *Romans II* to a "reworking" of the history of the Enlightenment legacy may appear to work

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 103.

⁸⁶ B McCormack, "A Scholastic of a Higher Order: The Development of Karl Barth's Theology, 1921-31", PhD dissertation, (Princeton University, 1990), 162.

⁸⁷ Busch, "God is God". McCormack is surely right to say that *Romans II* is "governed by a single, most highly *theological* theme which is pursued relentlessly." See McCormack, "Scholastic", 115.

⁸⁸ Quoted in Barth, *How I Changed my Mind*, translated by M E Bratcher, (Edinburgh, Saint Andrew Press, 1969), 25.

⁸⁹ McCormack, "Scholastic", 90. Thus neither the Great War nor the failure of socialism were in themselves the *cause* of Barth's theology. *Ibid*, 22. The theological crisis is that articulated by Overbeck.

only at the expense of 're-editing' the message of the text to the point of distortion. Yet if its final hermeneutical horizon is Overbeck's and Hume's dilemma,⁹⁰ the themes coinciding with the expressionist spirit of the times - nihilism (annihilation), the shattering of *bourgeois* reality etc. - must of necessity be subsumed into that same legacy.

It is not just that Overbeck is the catalyst between *Romans* I and *Romans* II; according to Barth, Overbeck is an inspired metatheological critic who left the theology of the time with the stark choice: either do non-theology or nothing. This conclusion Overbeck based on premises derived from early Church history, in particular the unfulfilled expectation of the parousia in the lifetime of the early Church. (That is why he had lost faith through the study of early Church history.) But where Barth and Overbeck part company is over the latter's assumption that the eschatological is the domain of history, and hence non-theology. Certainly if Overbeck is right on this, Barth will give up the ghost on the prospect of "theology in and for itself". Indeed his proclamation that "Any Christianity which is not utterly and absolutely [*ganz und gar und restlos*] eschatological has utterly and absolutely nothing to do with Christ"⁹¹ informs us that such a condition was no less than a necessary condition of theology.⁹² It also announces the advent of that

⁹⁰ That does not mean there are no Kantian elements in *Romans II*. Barth himself refers to "closer acquaintance with Plato and Kant" as one of the reasons for rewriting *Romans*. See *CR* II, 4. Hendry has shown how Barth combined Plato and Kant (utilising the latter's concept of 'transcendental condition') in his treatment of the Fall of the world. See G S Hendry, "The Transcendental Method in the Theology of Karl Barth", *The Scottish Journal of Theology*, (1984), 216-9. Yet once again all this takes place within the horizon of Hume and Overbeck's dilemma as it is resolved by 'God is God'. Pears' remark that Kant fits the form rather than the content of the *Tractatus* applies equally well to *Romans II*. McCormack's cites Barth's statement that the revelation "does not become intuitable next to the other intuitable objects; it becomes intuitable [*anschaulich*] as the Unintuitable [*das Unanschauliche*]" (McCormack, "Scholastic", 136) as the launching pad for a distinctly Kantian interpretation of *Romans II*. This is to mistake what is only form, for content (the form being what Barth uses to express the content). AS Barth himself put it of Kant (and Lessing): "the wretched limits within which Kant and Lessing were still prepared to grant [revelation] validity were also evidence of one-sidedness; these were all murderous attempts upon the wealth and depth of the truth." Barth, *PT*, 409.

⁹¹ Barth, *CR* II, 314.

⁹² This can be represented and demonstrated logically. We have established that:

- (1) 'God is God' entails the possibility of theology.
- (2) The existence of theology entails God is God.

characteristic Barthian voice of dialectical irony missing in *Romans* I and "The Strange New World Within the Bible": "Quite so, Overbeck! Any Christianity which is not utterly and absolutely eschatological has utterly and absolutely nothing to do with Christ."⁹³

Overbeck thought of the parousia as a historical event, and hence as a phenomenon of non-theology, specifically, of course, history. In response Barth appropriated the term "primal history" from Overbeck, but used it, in a sense Overbeck never intended, to retheologise the eschatological dimension, (in the process tying protology to eschatology).⁹⁴

In *Romans* II this is synonymous with retheologising the Resurrection since there the Resurrection is made a function of the eschatological (the identity of the Resurrection is "absolutely and utterly" eschatological, not to say "absolutely and utterly" theological). But since theology "in and for itself" entails 'God is *God*', the assertion that "The resurrection is the revelation of the disclosing of Jesus as the

(3) 'God is *God*' entails the eschatological dimension.

Barth's statement on Romans 8.24 above can be translated into logical terms as:

(5) if -[Eschatological dimension (Resurrection)] then -['God is *God*'], (assuming a Christocentric emphasis)

from which it follows:

(6) if 'God is *God*' then Eschatological dimension (Resurrection).

Therefore, from (2):

(7) in *Romans* II the existence of theology entails the eschatological dimension.

⁹³ Thus Jüngel writes: "The end of Barth's theological beginnings, and the dawn of the so-called dialectical theology, can be seen most clearly in Barth's lecture 'Unsettled Questions for Theology Today' which took the form of a review of Overbeck's aphorisms in *Christentum und Kultur*." See Jüngel, *Barth*, 56. Pace M Beintker's determination to show that a dialectical theology of a kind exists in Barth's so-called "pre-dialectical" phase (M Beintker, *Die Dialektik in der 'dialektischen Theologie' Karl Barths* (Munich, Chr Kaiser Verlag, 1987), 109-117), there is little doubt it is Overbeck's metatheological dilemma which from now on predetermines the characteristic contours of Barth's dialectical irony. The period of Barth's theology encompassed by this study begins with "The Strange New World Within the Bible". This lecture anticipates the theme of *sui generis* theological truth though without the characteristic dialectical irony which informs Barth's theology from his encounter with Overbeck's metatheological dilemma onwards. Thus not only does Overbeck inform *Romans* II, it is also the final horizon of *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* and the *Church Dogmatics*.

⁹⁴ Jüngel, *Barth*, 35.

Christ, the appearing of God, and the apprehending of God in Jesus."⁹⁵ attests to 'God is *God*' revealed in the eschatological.⁹⁶ In other words, there is now "absolute and utter" identity (an identity Barth will later retract)⁹⁷ between theological truth as expressed in 'God is *God*' and the eschatological.

In other words, Barth's proclamation 'God is *God*', coinciding as it must with the deliverance of the Resurrection from non-theology⁹⁸ and reinstantiation of it in the realm of the *sui generis* theological, has no horizon other than Overbeck's metatheological dilemma, itself also articulated in language whose subject-matter is the realm of eschatological phenomena (though in Overbeck this is a function of the historical).

Overbeck's dilemma is the final horizon of *Romans* II and not just a horizon. Given the identity of God is *God* and the eschatological, and the fact that Barth's use of dialectic whether between time and eternity or Christ and Adam, the Old Man and the New Man (in Christ) is logically subordinate to his futuristic yet

⁹⁵ Barth, *CR* II, 30. As we shall see, throughout Barth's theological life, the Resurrection is God's self-revelation.

⁹⁶ Thus Jüngel's thesis that 'God is *God*' is to be construed as a proposition of natural theology (Jungel, *Barth*, 78) is to be rejected.

⁹⁷ Later, in the *Church Dogmatics*, Barth will retract this assertion and reverse the functional relationship, making the eschatological a function of the Resurrection. See Barth *CD* II/1, 631-638. Later still in the *Dogmatics* the Resurrection is constituted by pre-temporal, post-temporal and supra-temporal properties, (not the post-temporal one). Barth, *CD* III/2, 488ff.

⁹⁸ Thus for Barth, believing historicism is just as much a species of non-theology as unbelieving historicism:

"... in spite of all believing and unbelieving historicism and psychologising, we encounter in Jesus the scandal of an eternal revelation The truth of God is not liable to the 'flux of history'. His action can neither be perceived everywhere nor be dismissed as being nowhere. In Jesus, and precisely in him, the Love of God breaks through all historical and psychological analysis and in directness and mediation transcends both, for it is bound neither to this or that thing nor to this or that place." Barth, *CR* II, 277.

Later historicism (and psychologism) as tokens of non-theology became a "shorthand" for what it is Barth opposed on behalf of theology. McCormack writes: "These two targets of Barth's criticism are attacked separately but at times are coupled together. This will occur with increasing frequency during the course of the 1920s, becoming a shorthand for that which he opposes." McCormack, "Scholastic", 135.

dehistoricized (and retheologised) eschatology,⁹⁹ then it follows that dialectic *must* be logically subordinate to 'God is *God*'. This latter conclusion concurs with Barth's own view that his various dialectical "meanderings" are merely ways of expressing 'God is *God*'.¹⁰⁰ Thus again dialectic falls within the remit of the metatheological dilemma.

Dialectical speech¹⁰¹ as speech acknowledging God is *God*, is also subordinate to this formula. In his Elgersberg Address Barth made the famous utterance that: "As theologians we ought to speak of God. We are human, however, and so cannot speak of God."¹⁰² Once again the spectre of Overbeck's metatheological dilemma hovers over our thinking: either do non-theology or nothing. This is to recapitulate methodological thesis (iv.) set out in chapter 1: to speak of God does not imply one is doing theology, for simply to use the word

⁹⁹ McCormack, "Scholastic", 143.

¹⁰⁰ Quoted in Busch, *Barth*, 119. McCormack is surely right to assert that *Romans* II is "more of a piece of artistic theology than scientific. Barth is not at all interested in precise definitions of the philosophical terminology he employs. By any scientific standards he must be viewed as incautious and inconsistent in his use of terminology like 'dialectic' and 'paradox'. He does not work with a single definition of either concept, nor does he attempt to coordinate his various usages in order to show their interrelations. He uses such words much like Van Gogh used colour - as packets of energy which create their own meaning as they are used." McCormack, "Scholastic", 124.

¹⁰¹ McCormack makes the distinction between an ontic dialectic and a noetic dialectic. McCormack, "Scholastic", 174-5. According to McCormack Barth forwards three types of dialectic: two ontic dialectics, both eschatological in nature, and a noetic dialectic. *Ibid*, 163.

¹⁰² McCormack correctly points out that, strictly speaking, dialectical speech does not enter in to the theological frame until the special lectures of 1922. Yet, as he says, comments on dialectical thinking are not wholly absent from *Romans* II. McCormack, "Scholastic", 175. See Barth, *CR* II, 3-4:

"Does the general demand for simplicity mean more than a desire - intelligible enough, and shared by most theologians - that truth should be expressed directly, without paradox, and in such a way that it can be received otherwise than by faith alone? I am thinking here of an experience in relation to that earnest and upright man, Wernle. As a modern man he is deeply hurt when I say, for example, plainly and simple - Christ is risen. He complains that I have made use of an eschatological phrase, and have ridden rough-shod over very, very difficult problems of thought. However when I endeavour to say the same thing in the language of thought, that is, in dialectical fashion, he protests in the name of the simple believer that the doctrine of the Resurrection is wonderful, spiritual, and hard to understand. How can I answer him? He would be satisfied only if I were to surrender the broken threads of faith, and to speak directly, concretely, and without paradox."

"God" does not mean that one is talking about *God*.¹⁰³ This is the rationale behind the recourse to dialectical speech. If Overbeck is right then theology is extinct because what appears to be theology is in fact history (and similarly if Feuerbach is right then what appears to be theology is in fact anthropology). If we attempt to speak of God directly we are doing non-theology (we are human); but if we say nothing, we are left with the fact that we must say something (we are theologians). Thus theological statement and counter-statement is a necessary condition of speaking of God, which is to say, statement and counter-statement taken individually are species of non-theological speech and therefore not speech about *God*.¹⁰⁴

Barth moved beyond dialectical speech because he came to realise that it failed to satisfy the criteria for *sui generis* theology. In other words, dialectical speech as *dialectical* speech was not *sui generis* enough. Thus though along with McCormack one should reject von Balthasar's thesis that "Because [Barth] wanted to produce pure theology, his speech unintentionally became philosophy",¹⁰⁵ there is a germ of truth in what von Balthasar said. One could put it this way: though dialectical speech is not philosophical speech, from the vantage-point of the *Church Dogmatics* it was not *sui generis* theological speech. It is *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* that enables him to complete the project, to complete the *sui generis*

¹⁰³ As Busch puts it: "it implies the critical thesis that our speaking of God does not automatically speak of *God*." Busch, "God is God", 104. What is perhaps less obvious from Busch is Barth's parallel thesis that our speaking Christocentrically does not automatically speak *Christocentrically*. For Barth, speaking of *God* entails speaking *Christocentrically* and speaking *Christocentrically* entails speaking of *God*.

¹⁰⁴ Given the identity of 'God is *God*' and the eschatological, it follows that dialectical speech is no less in force in face of the latter:

"In the resurrection the new world of the Holy Spirit touches the old world of the flesh, but touches it as a tangent touching a circle, that is without touching it. And precisely because it does not touch it, it touches it as its frontier - as the new world. The resurrection is therefore an occurrence in history, which took place outside the gates of Jerusalem in the year 30 A D, inasmuch as it there 'came to pass', was discovered and recognised. But inasmuch as the occurrence was conditioned by the resurrection, insofar as it was not the 'coming to pass', or the discovery, or the recognition, which conditioned its necessity and appearance and revelation, the Resurrection is not an event in history at all." Barth, *CR II*, 30.

¹⁰⁵ McCormack, "Scholastic", 115.

circle. In that sense dialectical speech turns not to be part of the blue-print.¹⁰⁶

Concluding Remarks.

To be sure, the theme of the eschatological is not present in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, nor in Schoenberg or Loos (though it is present in Kraus's *Die Letzten Tage der Menschheit*, his monumental satire on World War One). Yet it is precisely because Overbeck's rueful judgement on theology arose from the unfulfilled eschatological hopes of the early church that Barth uses the eschatological motif in *Romans II* - his instantiation of *sui generis* theological truth - to resolve the metatheological dilemma.

Prima facie, though the eschatological in *Romans II* appears to speak first of crisis, its last and enduring word is *sui generis* theological truth. Yet though the exclusively post-temporal dimension of the eschatological is one way of guaranteeing a *sui generis* theological realm, it is not a necessary and sufficient condition. That Barth will reaffirm revelation as temporal and still manage to resolve (in fact, improve on his resolution of) the metatheological dilemma, is one of the hall-marks of the genius of the *Church Dogmatics*. It is to this work that we now turn.

¹⁰⁶ It was not alone in this respect. As has been noted in #97 of this chapter, this too was the fate awaiting the 'Resurrection is exclusively eschatological' thesis. Moreover, in chapter 8 we will see that the third significant casualty was the realist hermeneutics implicit in *Romans II*.

Part Two

Chapter Three

I. From the "Iconoclastic" *Romans II* to the "Neo-Orthodox" *Church Dogmatics*: a Retrograde Step?

The more immediate interpretation of the corpus of Barth's *Church Dogmatics* fell into two main camps of thought: a modernist or modern camp and a traditionalist or conservative camp. The first camp delivered an overall unfavourable assessment while the reaction of the second camp (excluding the disapproval of some fundamentalist elements in the Church), was much more commendatory and recommendatory. The curious yet systematic fact also emerged that where the first camp thought *Romans II* a superior and more engaging product compared to the *Church Dogmatics*, the second camp, whose interest in *Romans II* was minimal, thought the reverse.

From the perspective of the moderns the step Barth took with the *Church Dogmatics* following on from *Romans II* was a retrograde step. For all that *Romans II* gave the appearance of naivety, that the author was somehow not quite "up with the times", that he remained stuck with a number of long outdated views, *Romans II* was somehow less repristinating, somehow more modern than the *Church Dogmatics*.¹ *Romans II* appeared as an iconoclastic spirit in the wake of the First World War, as if a lightning bolt from heaven itself. Among other things, *Romans II* had, in conjunction with other German-speaking intellectuals of Barth's time, participated in the rediscovery of Kierkegaard. If for no other reason, the book appeared to be imbued with the spirit of the times. In contrast, the *Church Dogmatics* appeared to be imbued with the spirit of the past, a spirit at once repristinating and anachronistic; which is to say, it appeared to be handicapped by what *Romans II* had mercifully remained free of - a no doubt heroic yet fated to be

¹ Bultmann is a prime example of this reaction. Within certain carefully drawn limits derived from modernity, Bultmann thought there was much to appreciate in *Romans II*; in contrast, he thought the *Church Dogmatics* was a retrograde step in the direction of a completely out-moded neo-orthodoxy.

unsuccessful recovery, much in the manner of Proust's *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu*, of what had become (come the Enlightenment) irredeemably lost doctrines.² It is no surprise that the theologians who had felt an evident affinity with *Romans II*, the group of so-called 'dialectical theologians' who had formed round the journal *Zwischen den Zeiten* - Bultmann, Gogarten, Merz, etc. - broke with the Barth of the *Church Dogmatics* as he in turn broke with them.³

In other words, to the modern camp Barth's *Church Dogmatics*, full as it was of scholarly awareness and appraisal of the whole church theological tradition of the past, appeared out of joint with the canons of the Enlightenment. It appeared to invoke a uncritical adherence to the material witness of Scripture, the Creeds, and the witness of the Church. In short, it appeared to choose the authority of tradition and the common sense interpretation of the Bible - Creation, the Incarnation, the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection - in open contradiction to the discoveries and implications of the Enlightenment and its ethos. It even insisted on presenting these doctrines in a format taken from the 16/17th century! Where Wittgenstein was accused of basing his philosophy on the tradition of ordinary language shot through as it was with obsolete discredited science, Barth was accused of basing his *Church Dogmatics* on a Biblical tradition similarly shot through with obsolete scientific world-views. Scientific and technological progress had not only brought about a radically altered vision of the universe and man's place and destiny in it; it had also brought electricity, aeroplanes, modern medicine. Accordingly, the modern mind could no longer give the once customary obedience to the authority of the Church. Bonhoeffer's criticism that Barth offered a "positivism of revelation" (in the sense of that which is the "given") encapsulated a whole generation of attitude toward Barth's *Church Dogmatics* from one side of the theological establishment. A positivism of revelation; a positivism of Scripture: for example, the Virgin Birth and

² McCormack's genetic-historical analysis of Barth's theology (McCormack, "Scholastic"), can be seen as a relentless critique of this very view, namely that the *Church Dogmatics* has been construed as a document advocating "neo-orthodoxy" and a return to the past splendour of the classical doctrines of Christian Church.

³ See J M Robinson (ed), *The Beginnings of Dialectical Theology* (Richmond, Virginia, John Knox Press, 1968) for the early history of the dialectical movement.

Resurrection; a positivism of Church dogma: for example, the doctrine of the Trinity: it was all the same thing. Accordingly, Barth was labelled "Neo-Orthodox":

He (Barth) wants to be "Orthodox", to adhere to the line which theology followed until the dawn of the "Enlightenment", of "Rationalism". On this line he wants to insert into theology that which the Reformed and Lutheran Orthodox did not allow to come into its own with respect to the Bible, confession and dogma. Therefore, "medieval" and "patristic" elements, so far as a Luther and a Calvin continued them, should remain and be reappropriated.⁴

But if Barth's *Church Dogmatics* was criticised by the moderns for wanting to stop at the point on the historical line where, among other things, Descartes and Cartesian rationalism appears, which is to say the age of the beginning of modern philosophy and the Enlightenment, there was a second traditionalist-conservative camp which took these 'weaknesses' to be strengths.

There were those who gathered round Barth as if he were the founder of a school: just as Wittgenstein had his Wittgensteinians Barth had his Barthians, those who held fast to the Barthian 'system'. There also was the Roman Catholic tradition. For them it was just those comprehensive references to the Pre-Enlightenment theological tradition of "medieval" and "patristic" elements in Barth, his attention to both the early and the later Church Fathers, that made his work worthy of serious and respectful attention.⁵ However opposed they were on other issues, the two perspectives were united in their appreciation of Barth's supposed new orthodoxy resting as it did on Church tradition and the authority of the Bible.

Yet in spite of the fact that the *pro* Barth and *contra* Barth camps profoundly disagreed on the merits of Barth, it is clear they both revolve round the belief that - more so than *Romans II* - the *Church Dogmatics* could not be reconciled with the legacy of the Enlightenment embodied as it was in the *leitmotifs* of autonomy and criticism.

Certainly, there is no doubt that the *Church Dogmatics* affirmed in some sense to be determined everything that in some sense to be determined the witnesses

⁴ Quoted in McCormack, "Scholastic", 1.

⁵ See G Foley, "The Catholic Critics of Karl Barth." *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 14, (1961), 136-155; see also H Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, translated by J Drury, (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc, 1971), 33-34.

of revelation affirmed. That means it affirmed the resurrection appearances, the Virgin Birth, the Empty Tomb and a host of other terms that had received an expressivist twist in the historical (dialectical) process of responding to the Enlightenment criterion of truth by evading it. But does that entail it conflicts with the Enlightenment *leitmotifs*? Not necessarily.

II. *Sui Generis* Theological Truth, Hans Frei's Meaning-Truth Divide and the Enlightenment.

In *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative* Hans Frei forwarded the historical thesis that under the Enlightenment impact of, *inter alia*, Deism, empirical philosophy and historical criticism - "part of the technical intellectual background" of the eighteenth century - what hitherto has been the consensus, even unanimous, literal reading of the Bible was challenged, and eventually (at least in the intellectual community), succeeded by, a critical-historical reading whose criterion of meaning was whether the Bible was a reliable historical report.⁶

Contra the Enlightenment demand that the Bible be subjected to the consequences of historical criticism, Frei's own counter-Enlightenment (not Counter-Enlightenment) strategy was to argue that the Gospel stories as well as large portions of the Old Testament were indeed *realistic*⁷ but "that the issue of their making or not making factual claims is not part of the scope of hermeneutical

⁶ H Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical narrative. A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (London, Yale University Press, 1974), 2. For general historical background, 1-16.

⁷ *Ibid*, 10. Frei's definition of realistic narrative is as follows: "Realistic narrative reading is based on one of the characteristics of the Gospel story, especially in its later part, viz. that it is history-like - in its language as well as its depiction of a common public world (no matter whether we think it is the one we all inhabit), in the close interaction of character and incident, and in the non-symbolic quality of the relation between the story and what the story is about. In other words, whether the story reports history (either reliably or unreliably) whether or not the Gospel stories are other things besides realistic stories, what they tell us is the fruit of the stories themselves. They are history-like precisely because like history-writing and the traditional novel and unlike myths and allegories they literally mean what they say. There is no gap between the representation and what is represented." Frei, *The Identity of Jesus Christ: The Hermeneutical Bases of Dogmatic Theology* (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1975), xiii-xiv.

enquiry".⁸ In other words:

Meaning in this view is logically distinct from "truth" even where the two bear so strong a family resemblance as the designations "history-like" and "historical" imply. The factuality or non-factuality of at least some of these narratives, important as it is no doubt in a larger religious or an even more general context, involves a separate argument from that concerning their meaning.⁹

Hence the Bible or large tracts of it including the Gospel story were exempt - because such an imposition was categorially logically inappropriate - from the requirement of historical criticism:

... if it seemed clear that a biblical story was to be read literally, it followed automatically that it referred to and described actual historical occurrences. The true historical reference of a story was a direct and natural concomitant of its making literal sense. This is a far cry from taking the fact that a story makes best sense at literal level as evidence that it is a reliable historical report.¹⁰

But the distinction was fraught with difficulties. For all that Frei wanted to distinguish decisively between meaning and truth, it appeared as if truth had been smuggled into the realm of meaning: the meaning of the text *implied* that it "referred to and described actual historical occurrences". Frei appeared to be committed to two concepts of truth, on the one hand truth as a function of meaning, i.e. operating within the domain of meaning and, on the other, truth logically distinct from meaning, operating extratextually. This commitment to an apparently intratextual concept of truth is the motivation behind Garret Green's suspicion that (as in the ontological argument for the existence of God) *The Identity of Jesus Christ* attributes existence as a predicate to a character in a narrative story.¹¹

Frei appeared to be sensitive to the charge that he had smuggled truth into the realm of meaning. He saw that the consequences of his position were not unlike those drawn by the practitioners of New Criticism. Speaking of the type of ('literary realist') view he had held, e.g., in *The Identity of Jesus Christ*, he wrote:

⁸ Frei, "The 'Literal Reading' of the Biblical narrative: Does It Stretch or Will It Break?", in F D O'Connell (ed), *The Bible and the Narrative Tradition* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1986), 62.

⁹ *Ibid*, 62-63.

¹⁰ Frei, *Eclipse*, 2.

¹¹ G Green, "Fictional Narrative and Scriptural Truth", in G Green (ed), *Scriptural Authority and Narrative Interpretation* (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1987), 91.

The resemblance of this view to Anglo-American "New Criticism" is obvious and has often been pointed out. Both claim that the text is a normative and pure "meaning" world of its own, which quite apart from any factual reference it may have, and part from its author's intention or its reader's reception, stands on its own with the authority of self-evident intelligibility.¹²

More significantly, in acknowledging the resemblance, Frei perceived his position to be beset with the very same difficulty:

... the claim of the self-subsistence or self-referentiality of the text apart from any true world is as artificial as it may (perhaps) be logically advantageous: Moreover, the view is not usually held consistently, for the New Critics argue not only for the integrity but the truth of their approach when challenged by contrary reductionist views such as Historicism, Structuralism, or Deconstructionism.¹³

Frei no less than the New Critics had smuggled truth into meaning:

Despite their anti- or non-philosophical bearing, in fact many of them espouse a theory of a purely aesthetic truth in literalism.¹⁴

Hence Frei later retracted the view that the *sensus literalis* stood in a dependent functional relationship to the category of realistic narrative. Instead, retaining the *sensus literalis*, he followed Lindbeck and posited it as a function of the use of the text in the believing community.¹⁵ Effectively he moved the hermeneutical onus from meaning *inhering* in the text itself to the *practice* or *use* it had within the believing community.¹⁶

Instead of truth existing somewhat ambiguously in the realm of meaning, Frei now proposed a complete divide between meaning (use) and truth (reference), between ascription and description, thus avoiding any hint of intratextual truth. The consensus of literal sense

is a hermeneutical one and extends no further than that. As soon as we try to understand the text - as we are bound to do - under some such categorical scheme as "meaning" and "sense", and "truth" or "reference" and then observe the logical distinction between these two categories, we find ourselves in a world of seemingly irreducible diversity. In other words, "literal" is not referentially univocal but embraces many possibilities. The Jesus we identify by his passion story is for some no more than this Or the referent may be an actual historical figure. In other

¹² Frei, "'Literal'", 63.

¹³ *Ibid*, 64.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 64.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 71.

¹⁶ Frei, "Literal", 67-72.

words, the consensus covers the literal reading of the meaning of the New Testament stories about Jesus in an ascriptive mode but not the reality status of the ascriptive subject Jesus or even all the details of the descriptive elements of the story.¹⁷

Meaning as use is unambiguously separated off from realism and the natural concomitant of truth as it had not been the case in the *Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*. Frei no longer claimed as he had in the *Eclipse* that from meaning it "followed" it described true historical occurrences or instantiated a true historical reference. Truth is now strictly an extratextual affair.

The question is whether such a manoeuvre - recourse to a strict truth-meaning divide - was the only possibility available to Frei. Might the problem not have been that Frei is ensnared by a general concept of truth (realism, correspondence, etc.) which he first subsumed into his theory of meaning and then set free into what he saw as its rightful place on the other side of the meaning-truth divide.

Frei's history of the Enlightenment can be validly paraphrased as follows:

Where once the Bible was read literally and, since history-like, taken to be *true*, under the impact of the Enlightenment critique in the eighteenth century, truth in this realm was gradually entrusted to the dominion of historical criticism and hence inevitably assimilated as atomised critical-historical *reference*.

But if once again a more historicist view of the Enlightenment is taken, then, just as Schleiermacher was not necessarily the true legatee of the Enlightenment (an Enlightenment without Schleiermacher), neither is a Bible construed as critical-historical reference (an Enlightenment without a critical-historical reading of the Bible). Indeed, instead of measuring purely aesthetic (autonomous) truth against a general concept of truth as Frei did, aesthetic (autonomous) truth corresponds to - acts as parable for - Barth's concept of *sui generis* truth. *Sui generis* theological truth resembles purely aesthetic truth to the extent that it too in affirming its autonomy distinguishes itself from, and resists being assimilated by, "the contrary

¹⁷ Frei, *Types of Theology*, edited by G Hunsinger and W C Placher, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992), 42-43.

reductionist views" of "historicism, structuralism and Deconstructionism". Barth satisfies the principles of the Enlightenment without adhering to the historical-critical reading of the Bible.

Instead of aesthetic truth Barth's *Church Dogmatics* offers us *sui generis* theological truth without, *pace* Frei, realist reference.¹⁸ Barth affirms the *sui generis* autonomy of theology in the form of a *sui generis* autonomous theological realm in which there is no logical space for the methodological tools of the non-theological - historical criticism, philosophical empiricism, anthropological cross-cultural comparisons, abstraction of psychological universals, etc. - even to co-exist in vestigial form, far less be a natural and logical concomitant of the theological.

The aim of this chapter is no more than to delineate this theological realm and show how Barth in the *Church Dogmatics* remains from beginning to end a theologian who demarcates theology from history in particular, but also implicitly other realms of the non-theological - anthropology, psychology and philosophy, etc. The principle of criticism has of course to be satisfied if one is to make good the claim that Barth is "God's Enlightenment" and in such a way that while it is God who is first of all the chief end of the man Barth's endeavours, the Enlightenment is not betrayed or cheated by some kind of sleight of hand. But that will be left to later chapters.

III. "The Strange New World Within" the *Church Dogmatics*.

One other profound implication of the assimilation of the Bible to the domain of historical criticism was the disintegration of typological or figural interpretation, a method of exegesis "at once a literary and a historical procedure, an interpretation of stories and their meanings by weaving them together into a common narrative

¹⁸ D Davidson's philosophy of meaning is representative of an Enlightenment theory that advocates a theory of meaning as truth without reference. He opposes the "building-block" theory of meaning of the early British empiricists (Berkeley, Hume, Mill) - the meanings of singular terms are the basic "building-blocks" of the meanings of sentences - in favour of a "holistic" theory of meaning as truth in which reference only emerges as an *inferred* explanatory variable, much as unobserved sub-atomic structure does in physics. D Davidson, "Reality Without Reference", *Enquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1984), 219-222.

referring to a single history and its meaning."¹⁹ Frei describes this demise as follows:

If one sign of the breakdown of literal-realistic interpretation of the biblical stories was the reversal in the direction of interpretation that accompanied the distancing between the narratively depicted and the "real" world, the other was the collapse of figural interpretation. [...] Typology or figuration simply could not cope with this reversal. It has been credible as an extension of literal reading, but once literal and historical reading began to break apart, figural interpretation became discredited both as a literal device and as a historical argument. As a literary or (more basically) logical device, figuration offended against the elementary assumption that a propositional statement has only one meaning. As a historical argument (i.e. that the Old Testament contained prophecies specifically referring to and fulfilled in Jesus Christ) it strained credulity beyond the breaking-point by the suggestion that sayings and events of one day referred predictively to specific persons and events hundreds of years later. Simultaneously of course it faded into oblivion as a means of relating the world of biblical narrative to present experience and to the world of extra-biblical events, experiences, and concepts.²⁰

To be sure, "Barth sees God's acts as the context in which all other events have to be understood"; moreover, the "whole of the *Church Dogmatics* can be seen as an attempt to think through the implications of this for Christian faith, knowledge and practice in all areas of life";²¹ yet when Barth really ties the *Church Dogmatics* extra-biblically then systematically to his overall framework it is usually the Old Testament that stands as his representative of world history.²² One such pivotal passage is:

¹⁹ Frei, *Eclipse*, 2. Ford describes typology as standing "between on the one hand allegory (understood as the description of one reality under the guise of some other which has suitable similarities) and, on the other hand, a description of earthly personal existence in such a way that it does 'mean' anything else - it just is what it is. The mark of typology is that the literal meaning or historical reality both is itself and at the same time points to another event or person of fuller meaning." Ford, "The Interpretation of the Bible", in Sykes (ed), *Karl Barth: Studies of His Theological Method* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1979), 65.

²⁰ Hans Frei, *Eclipse*, 3-4. Frei quotes Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* with approval: "far from seeking like Homer's *Illiad* to enable us to enjoy a few hours away from the ordinary world of mundanity, the Old and New Testaments seek to overcome our ordinary mundane world. It is a question of fitting our own life into the world of the New Testament; and of letting its reality overcome our reality." *Ibid*, 3. In contrast, as Ford asserts, post-Enlightenment world views "insisted on finding more general frames of reference (whether universal history, man's individual, social, religious, or political development or some other frame) into which the biblical story was fitted or not" Ford, *Interpretation*, in S Sykes (ed), *Karl Barth: Studies of His Theological Method* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1979), 64.

²¹ Ford, "Interpretation", 64.

²² *Ibid*, 65.

... this one man - it is as if the framework is now filled out and burst through - is the Son of God who is one with God the Father and is Himself God. [...] The Old Testament, and also the New Testament in its constant implicit and explicit connection with the Old, makes it quite clear that for all its originality and uniqueness what took place in Christ is not an accident, not a historical *novum*, not the arbitrary action of a *Deus ex machina*, but that it was and is the fulfilment - the superabundant fulfilment - of the will revealed in the Old Testament who even there was the One who manifested Himself in this one man Jesus of Nazareth - the gracious God who as such is able and willing and ready to condescend to the lowly and to undertake their case at His own cost.²³

Yet, even given the repudiation of historical criticism it does not follow that in Barth's theology the typology-prototypicality relation is thereby exonerated, even vindicated and reinstated as some kind of repristinated medieval *status quo*. In other words, not only is Barth not interested in a kind of theological analogue of the sort of astrological science-cum-superstition common in the middle ages, in which the particulars of (as then) present individual history and human experience were casually related to God's plan - not only is he not (in his theology at least) concerned to see God's plan in each and every minutia of world history;²⁴ rather, even in the case of what is his own prototypical world-history analogue - God's *de re* identity in Old Testament times - Barth's point of departure is the very theological realm reinstated in the face of "Hume's fork".

Barth gave early notice that his historic task would be to reassert the *sui generis* autonomy of theology. As early as February 1917, even before the publication of the first edition of *Romans*, Barth had made a theological address to the Church in Leutwil, an address whose content takes on a distinctly prophetic quality when viewed from the retrospect of Barth's insistence on the reality of *sui generis* theology. It is another datum to add to the thesis that the objective of Barth's *whole* enterprise is to take up and refute the challenge that theology is a non-subject. The title of the address was no less than "The Strange New World Within the Bible",²⁵ a title intimating Barth's as yet faint impression that the world

²³ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 170.

²⁴ See Barth, *CD III/3*, 198, 134f.

²⁵ Barth "The Strange New World Within the Bible", *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, translated by D Horton, (New York, Harper, 1957), 28-50. The original title is *Die neue Welt in der Bibel* but to translate this as *The New World Within the Bible* omits the intention of the German to

or realm therein contained was not to be assimilated to our known and habitual modes of classification. He opened his address with a statement of his theme that day:

We are to attempt to find an answer to the question, What is there within the Bible? What sort of house is it to which the Bible is the door? What sort of country is spread before our eyes when we throw the Bible open?²⁶

But rather than attempt to answer the question straightaway Barth does something else that is the very paradigm of immediacy: he takes the collective imagination of his audience (congregation) on a chronological journey through the history of the Old and New Testament. Barth offers his congregation an inventory or itemisation of the contents of the Bible. One short and sharp yet intensive *in medias res* biblical encounter is enacted, one after the other, with Barth rekindling the life of each story in not inconsiderable detail once the imagination of the congregation has so to speak found its feet in these foreign lands (though the strangeness Barth wants to impress on us is not that *inter alia* it depicts distant, exotic, and even - for Western civilisation - alien lands):

We are with Abraham in Haran. We hear a voice which commands him²⁷

Then:

We are with Moses in the wilderness. For forty years he has been living among the sheep²⁸

Then we are no longer with Moses in the wilderness but with Gideon at Ophrah in the land of Canaan:

convey the sense in which the world of the Bible is a world we must see in a new light, as different; in which case it is to appear "strange" to us. The historical circumstances surrounding its origins can be found in Busch, *Barth*, 100f. Busch himself writes that the lecture "was the first public account of the results of his new Bible studies." *Ibid*, 101. It unambiguously charted his "gradual awareness of the Bible." *Ibid*, 98. Not unconnected is what Barth himself wrote when writing the first edition of *Romans*: "During the work it was often as though I caught a breath from afar, from Asia Minor or Corinth, something primeval, from the ancient East, indefinably sunny, wild, original that somehow is hidden behind these sentences." *Ibid*, 98-9. In what follows it is not assumed that Barth remained steadfastly committed to everything he said in this address. Nevertheless there is no doubt that in retrospect it can be read as programmatic for what was to follow in *Romans* I and II (especially *Romans* II) and the *Church Dogmatics*.

²⁶ Barth, "World", 28.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 28.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 28.

It is a time of severe oppression in the land of Canaan. Under the oak at Ophrah stands the farmer's son, Gideon. The "angel of the Lord" appears to him²⁹

Now at Shiloh with Samuel:

In the tabernacle at Shiloh lies the young Samuel. Again a call: Samuel, Samuel!
....³⁰

Then we hear of Elijah being called by "the Lord" to defy the whole authority of his king, followed by his acquaintance with this "Lord" in the form of a "still, small voice";³¹ we hear of Isaiah's and Jeremiah's divine judgement and divine blessing on a sinful people³² - all these Barth also brings to life for the benefit of his audience's and ultimately our imagination.

At the end of each story a recognisably similar refrain is uttered in which Barth asks himself and his audience what it is they have encountered, what common factor emerges from the encounters. Thus after having been with Abraham in Haran Barth asks:

What is the meaning of all this. We can but feel that there is something behind these words and experiences. But what?³³

And after being with Moses in the wilderness he says:

Here again are words and experiences which seem at first to be nothing but riddles. We do not read the like in the daily papers or in other books. What lies behind?³⁴

And again having been given entry to the tabernacle at Shiloh where young Samuel lies:

We read all this, but what do we read behind it? We are aware of something like the ceaseless thunder of ocean waves against thin dykes; but what really is it that beats at the barrier and seeks entrance here?³⁵

Yet the answer one might have expected from a theologian who turned out

²⁹ *Ibid*, 29.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 29. It is noteworthy that Barth ends his address by returning his audience once more to the realm of the Bible: "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many; and sent his servant at supper-time to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready!"

³¹ *Ibid*, 29-30.

³² *Ibid*, 30.

³³ *Ibid*, 28.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 29

³⁵ *Ibid*, 29.

to be as Christocentric as Barth, is not what is submitted on this particular occasion. To be sure, Barth speaks of "the incomprehensible, incomparable days, when all previous time, history, and experience seem to stand still - like the sun at Gibeon - in the presence of a man who was no prophet, no poet, no hero, no thinker, and yet all of these and more!"³⁶ - the days of Jesus Christ. But for all that these days are absolute and everything else relative, for all that elsewhere Barth will hold they are the fulfilment of all Old Testament history, when the single utterance - "Then the echo ceases. The Bible is finished." - brings the exercise in imagination to a close,³⁷ Barth will still exclaim: "And again we ask: What is there within the Bible?"³⁸ In other words, it is not who or even what the Bible is about that is at stake here but rather: what type of phenomenon, what ('philosophical') kind or essence of character of phenomenon are we confronted with in the Bible? This is the vaguely monistic "meaning" Barth is at pains to uncover from the *sacra biblica* or even point at in an almost impossible way. This is what still beckons on the horizon. What kind of world is it? A historical world criss-crossed with cause and effect?:

What is there within the Bible? *History!* The history of a remarkable even, unique, people; the history of powerful, mentally vigorous personalities; the history of Christianity in its beginnings³⁹

Is history then the answer? No:

Now one can content oneself for a time with this answer and find in it many true and beautiful possibilities. The Bible is full of history; religious history, literary history, cultural history, world history, and human history of every sort. [...] But the pleasure is short-lived: the picture, on closer inspection, proves quite incomprehensible and flat, if it is meant only for history For when we study history and amuse ourselves with stories, we are always wanting to know: How did it happen? How is it that one event follows another? [...] It is just at the decisive points of its history that the Bible gives us no answer to our Why? [The] Bible meets the lover of history with silences quite unparalleled.⁴⁰

³⁶ *Ibid*, 30.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 31.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 31.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 34-35.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 35-36.

It is not history. Or rather, if it is history it is history *such that it cannot be treated as history*; it is history *and* it is history such that it makes no sense to treat it as history. In other words,

... we may not deny or prevent our being led by Bible "history" far out beyond what is elsewhere called history - into a new world, into the world of God.⁴¹

The world of God. From beginning to end, Barth's aim in "The Strange New World Within the Bible" is to recreate a sense of the otherness of the realm spoken of in the Bible, an otherness represented in a "history" that is precisely other than history:

Once more we stand before this "other" new world which begins in the Bible.⁴²

Yet the otherness of God's world is not only an otherness that is other than history. Barth's differentiation of God's world from history is simultaneously a differentiation from all other worlds. History is ultimately only a representative of the realm of the phenomena of the *non-theological*. Paradoxically, assimilated to the domain of non-theology, for example the sphere of historical methodology, the strange new world of the Bible is reduced to a mundane common-place flat ordinary even banal world. In other words, assimilated through a non-theological lens, the Bible is normalised. Conversely, only from the perspective of a *sui generis* theology aware of the difference between itself and non-theology can the realm of the Bible appear the strange new world it is. (The otherness that Barth attributes to God's world is an otherness unapprehendable by the non-theological but apprehendable by the theological, though the theological at this particular historical moment is about to be construed as dialectical - as dialectical speech about God.)⁴³

Yet the real lesson of admonition to be taken from Barth is that his theology intimates the presence of a *sui generis* theology at once radically differentiable from non-theology yet whose difference is not one for which experience prepares us or with which we are readily acquainted. This difference - the difference between *sui generis* theology and non-theology - can and does go virtually undetected, especially

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 37.

⁴² *Ibid*, 39.

⁴³ At the time of *Romans* II, Barth presents dialectical speech as the appropriate linguistic mode of talk about God - *inter alia* on the grounds that it is a mode of language not derivative of the language of history, psychology, etc.

by those who unbeknown to themselves have habituated to a conception of theology where difference is lacking (theology is non-theology).

Retrospectively, what makes "The Strange New World Within the Bible" revolutionary is not that it is capable of semiotic incarnation in the revolutionary crisis-ridden hyperbolic and ironic dialectical language of *Romans II* ("otherness" reappears in *Romans II* as the arresting mode of hyperbolic expression *totaliter aliter*); or even that once the dust of *Romans II* has settled and one is amidst the relative imperturbability even calm of the *Church Dogmatics*, "history" and historical methodology remain in the realm of non-theology; it is not even that once the dust settles and one is amidst the ostensible calm of the *Church Dogmatics*, "The Strange New World Within the Bible" plays a not inconsiderable role in deciphering the apparently intractable (because habitually and consistently misinterpreted) code of the Bible; it is rather that in carrying out this not inauspicious task it discloses a latent noumenal 'self' far more radical than hitherto imagined: an affirmation of the *sui generis* theological truth of the Bible or the retheologising of its truth, a proclamation that the character of the phenomena of the *sui generis* theological is such that its "otherness" is an otherness that defies and even rebukes realism as the key to the truth of the Bible insofar as it is a function of the non-theological and thus its mode of expression an example of non-theology.

In other words, "The Strange New World Within the Bible" gives early notice that when necessary - for the greater good of *sui generis* theology - Barth's theology will take issue with the fundamentalist realist concept of literal truth for the very same reason it takes issue with historical criticism. Barth's theology coincides with seventeenth century orthodoxy only in a contingent sense, only insofar as the theses of orthodoxy coincide with *sui generis* theology; it is anti-historical for the same contingent reason, only insofar as this phenomenon is non-theological. What to orthodoxy appears so central a truth that it is made a criterion of orthodoxy is to Barth's theology a manifestation of "heresy", on the grounds that it is in fact an extremely subtle form of the doctrine of the *analogia entis* (though to be sure, historical criticism (historicism) is a more obvious manifestation of the

phenomenon).⁴⁴ Such a manifestation is to be distinguished from literalisation (even reliteralisation) derived as a theological consequence, where it is functionally validated as an instance of the *analogia fidei*.⁴⁵

That is why it is no literary conceit to say that students of Barth can do no better than begin with Barth's angelology. For it is there that what is implicit in "The Strange New World Within the Bible" - *sui generis* theological truth - is made explicit. Indeed what makes this point of departure doubly germane (not to say ironic) is that Barth's doctrine of angels encapsulates not only in quasi-parabolic terms but also in quasi-real terms the point at which he makes contact with the question of the existence or otherwise of autonomous theology. For this question is the very question originating with Hume (implicitly) and Kant (explicitly) (see Chapter 1); and Hume and Kant both represent (the latter to a lesser degree) a historical Enlightenment dedicated to eliminating what it perceives as mythology.⁴⁶ Accordingly, Barth's angelology represents his answer - honed to a fine degree - as to what type of phenomenon, what ('philosophical') kind or essence of character of phenomenon it is we encounter in the Bible.

I refer to § 51 "The kingdom of Heaven, the Ambassadors of God and their Opponents" of *Church Dogmatics III/3*, completed in the summer of 1949.⁴⁷ There

⁴⁴ See Barth, *CD III/1*, 81ff, 193, 240ff.

⁴⁵ The path taken here is one already anticipated in the work of Frei. Frei objects to reading the gospel narrative as a species of realistic narrative because it presupposes an 'analogy of being'. Vanhoozer writes with some acuity: "To make the Gospels a type of the category 'realistic narrative' is to operate with what one might call an 'analogy of being' at the level of narrative. One first determines how realistic narrative works, and then proceeds to an interpretation of the Gospels. But neither Frei nor Barth wish to proceed to the things of God first by analysing the world or the language of the creature. Such was the error of natural theology. We might say that Frei objects to ... a 'natural theology of narrative'." K Vanhoozer, *Biblical Narrative in the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur: a Study in Hermeneutics and Theology* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), 164.

⁴⁶ For the history of the progressive elimination of myth leaving behind a supposed 'essence of Christianity', (a history culminating in von Harnack's *The Essence of Christianity*), see Gay *Enlightenment*, II "The Tension With Christianity", 212-419, esp. Ch 6 'In Dubious Battle' and esp. §III.

⁴⁷ Busch relates that Barth turned with special delight to angelology: "In depicting modernist angelology, which he called 'angelology with a shrug of the shoulders', he had almost a carnival night in his class. 'And when I said that these theologians did not allow the angels an entry permit,

Barth wrote that the dogmatic sphere of angelology "is the most remarkable and difficult of all":⁴⁸ "the most remarkable" because a sphere subjected to a modern attitude bordering on derision is in fact a key to the resolution of Overbeck's metatheological dilemma (talk about angels is essential otherwise there is no theology); "the most difficult" because all through the history of theology, theologians have allowed their preconceptions about the existence and nature of angels to frustrate what it is the Bible really has to say about them:

Decisive for all that follows is the emergence and the rapid domination of the assumption that it is possible, legitimate and necessary to seek the existence and nature of angels elsewhere than in their function as God's messengers. Certainly this took place in answer to a natural requirement of logic. But it did not take place in the sense and according to the pattern of the Biblical witness. It was under the sway of an alien interest that there was an increasing desire to know about the nature of the angels and an increasing belief that it was possible to know what these beings are in themselves, and therefore prior to and apart from the fact that they are *angeli*, the messengers of God.⁴⁹

Nowhere is this better exemplified than in the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas where the appropriately named *Doctor angelicus* poses no less than 118 individual questions on the matter of angels. There angels are treated as *essentiae spirituales, substantiae separatae*, little more than individual human beings and existences anthropomorphically transposed together with their social existence to the realm of a purely intellectual existence.⁵⁰

In other words, throughout the history of theology theologians have found

let alone a permanent visa, the room was filled with shouts of laughter.'" Busch, *Barth*, 365. This laughter is reciprocated by the angels. Barth jokingly acknowledged that they had the last laugh even when it came to him and his *Church Dogmatics*. "The angels laugh at old Karl. They laugh at him because he tries to grasp the truth about God in a book of Dogmatics. They laugh at the fact that volume follows volume and each is thicker than the previous one. As they laugh, they say to one another, "Look! Here he comes now with his little pushcart full of volumes of the *Dogmatics*!" - and they laugh about the men who write so much about Karl Barth instead of writing about the things he is trying to write about. Truly, the angels laugh." Quoted in G McAfee Brown, "Introduction", in G Casalis, *Portrait of Karl Barth* (Garden City, Doubleday and Company, 1963), 3.

⁴⁸ Barth *CD III/3*, 369.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 381. Once again it is the Augustinian legacy that wielded its powerful though ultimately misleading influence: "The basic innovation involved, although not introduced by Augustine, received at his hands its classical formulation." *Ibid*, 381.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 390-401.

it impossible to resist assimilating talk of angels to the canons of realist discourse, generating confusion rather than clarity. Come the Enlightenment the "moderns" wish to speak of God metaphysically hence - unable to rid themselves of the traditional "natural" picture of angels - eschew the language of angels because it is unable to co-exist with the scientific account of the world. Barth quotes D F Strauss on this: "If the modern idea of God and conception of the world are right, there cannot possibly be room for beings of this sort."⁵¹ Yet the Older Orthodoxy siding with the existence of "beings of this sort" (the same angels the Enlightenment rejected) is paradoxically a manifestation of the same error later compounded by the Enlightenment. (Thus Barth's reaction to Strauss's sceptical declaration as against the Older Orthodoxy is (as in the case of Overbeck) one of irony: "Quite so, there can be no room for beings of this sort!"):

If we are guilty of [imposing our own preconception of what angels are] ... we need not be surprised if we are entangled in all kinds of questions and difficulties which secretly hampered the angelology of older orthodoxy, which were merely increased by the sun of the Enlightenment that lit up so many other things, and which finally brought the whole subject into the disrepute from which it suffers to-day. These do not derive from what is discernible in the Bible as the witness to the work and revelation of God which also includes the existence and work of angels, but from the preconception by means of which it was hoped even in early days to provide rather than to facilitate an understanding of this witness They derived from the false translation with which even in the early days, and with the best of intentions, the biblical view and concept of angels were to be made more readily accessible.⁵²

Even though they had the Scripture-principle before them as they worked, the Older Orthodoxy was no less committed to the preconception that the existence of angels was *independent* and *autonomous*, in the sense that the existence of human beings was independent and autonomous. An old-fashioned 'common-sense' realism reigned supreme. That even the tradition of *sola scriptura* could succumb to this error explains Barth's caution when he wishes to learn what Scripture has to teach:

There is every reason to be particularly strict in our application of the Scripture-principle in this field because tradition has been unhelpful in this respect, not merely preparing the catastrophe which broke later and still affects us to-day, but doing something which was far worse, i.e., binding and obscuring the positive

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 413.

⁵² *Ibid*, 379.

instruction to be gained in the matter.⁵³

According to Barth "the name and concept of angels denotes a reality [*Wirklichkeit*] which is distinct from both God and man"⁵⁴ Yet even this is only true in the sense that "the doctrine of angels, unlike that of predestination, creation, or man, has in the strict sense no meaning and content of its own. Angels are not independent and autonomous subjects like God and man and Jesus Christ. They cannot therefore be made the theme of an independent discussion. [...] Strictly speaking, every angelological statement can only be an auxiliary or additional statement, an explanation and elucidation of what is not said properly and essentially of angels but ... of the divine action in Jesus Christ."⁵⁵ Yet the *theological* identity of angels not only precludes an ancient or modern "mythological" objectification, the name and concept of angels is a necessary component of the vocabulary of *sui generis* theology:

How are we to steer a way between this Scylla and Charybdis, between the far too interesting mythology of the ancients and the far too uninteresting "demythologisation" of most of the moderns? How are we to advance without becoming rash, exercise discretion without overlooking what has to be said, not saying too much and yet not failing to say what has to be said? How are we to be both open and cautious, critical and naive, perspicuous and modest? There are no spheres of dogmatics where we are not well advised to take note of these questions. But there are reasons why they are particularly dark and oppressive in the doctrine of angels which must now concern us.⁵⁶

Prima facie, it appears the biblical writers have also succumbed to the all too natural temptation to objectify the existence of angels. Yet Barth is adamant that one can steer through the "far too interesting mythology of the ancients" to a distinctly theological kernel of truth:

... it obviously makes no odds that in the construction of these accounts, the active imagination of the biblical authors, as is only to be expected, lived with images and conceptions which were stamped by the outlook and the mythology of their day and which we can no longer accept, but which it was not the purpose of the texts in

⁵³ *Ibid*, 379.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 370.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 370-1.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 369.

question to impart or force on us.⁵⁷

For Barth it is immaterial whether we reject the biblical writers' mythology in favour of the modern scientific account. Whatever mythological objectification the texts may harbour (e.g. an obsolete world view such as the three-decker universe) it is only a contingent means to a *sui generis* theological end.

Accordingly, had the biblical writers' representation of the world coincided with the modern scientific account, this would not have altered one whit the need for the name and concept of angels to appear in the theological vocabulary.

In other words, in diametrical opposition to Bultmann's "modern" demythologisation programme, the narrow course Barth steers is precisely one of theological truth. As if riding roughshod over the conscious will of the biblical writers, supervening overall is the intention of the texts to depict a *sui generis* theological realm, the *strange new world within the Bible*:

... we are even forced to say that the appearance of angels is always a distinctive sign of the basically continuous proximity of the biblical sphere to this sphere, and of its continual secret tendency in this direction. There is reason for surprise that angels are not more frequently mentioned in the Bible. The whole history of the Bible, while it intends to be and is real spatial-temporal history has a constant bias toward the sphere where it cannot be verified by the ordinary analogies of world history but seen and grasped only imaginatively and represented in the form of poetry. How can it be otherwise when it is the history of the work and revelation of God, which as such, as the history of the action and lordship of the Lord of heaven and earth, although it can also take place in the comparatively narrow sphere of historically verifiable occurrences, is not confined to the sphere of earthly analogies? To some extent the angels mark this transition, this reaching of the incommensurable into the commensurable, of mystery into the sphere of known possibilities.⁵⁸

To a modern "enlightened" theologian such as Rudolf Bultmann angels are an uncomfortable embarrassing presence best dealt with by demythologisation. To a theologian with this cast of mind, Barth's assertion that it is surprising angels are not mentioned more in the Bible appears mere dogmatic defiance. Yet to a man in pursuit of a *sui generis* theology the modern insistence that talk of angels be eliminated is synonymous with a tacit endorsement of the consequences of Overbeck's dilemma and the end of "theology in and for itself". It sanctions the

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 375.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 375.

historical Enlightenment's assertion of the inevitability of theology as non-theology.

To be sure, though angels are "figures of biblical saga and legend"⁵⁹

this assertion cannot mean that *fides quaerens intellectum* has to halt at the angels, or that the question of theological truth [*die theologische Wahrheitfrage*] has not to be raised in this matter.⁶⁰

Why not?

If this were the case, there would be no question of theological truth at all, and therefore no theology, no *fides quaerens intellectum*.⁶¹

If we halt at angels, if we refuse to countenance their admittance into our vocabulary, the question of theological truth collapses and with it theological truth; all that is left is mere history (non-theology) and not the strange new world within the Bible:

For in some way ... the whole of the biblical history is engaged in that transition to saga or legend, and the angels in particular can only make this clear.⁶²

Eliminating talk of angels, eliminating saga and legend, far from purifying theology of its mythological elements, eliminates the vocabulary, and with it the language, of *sui generis* theology.

That is why "... the doctrine of angels is to be theological in character"⁶³ But if this is the case - if there is theology "in and for itself" - then there is theological truth. What is such truth angelologically speaking? Barth readily acknowledges that the biblical ciphers concerning angels are "so obscure"; nevertheless the key apologetics and hermeneutics undoubtedly provide leads to results which are either "artificial or platitudinous."⁶⁴ Juxtaposed to the non-

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 375. Barth defines what he means by the terms "saga" and "legend" in *CD III/1*. "... I am using saga in the sense of an intuitive and poetic picture of a pre-historical reality of history which is enacted once and for all within the confines of time and space. Legend and anecdote are to be regarded as a degenerate form of saga: legend as the depiction in saga form of a concrete individual personality; and anecdote as the sudden illumination in saga form either of a personality of this kind or of a concretely historical situation." Barth, *CD III/1*, 81.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 376.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 376.

⁶² *Ibid*, 376.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 378

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 404.

theological realms of apologetics and hermeneutics is the theme of the autonomy of theology. If we look to either hermeneutics or apologetics then:

Our philosophy will spoil our theology, and our theology our philosophy. Our present concern is the first point. The knowledge which does not dare to be wholly and exclusively theological and therefore based on the witness of Holy Scripture will as such be a pale and uncertain knowledge and erroneous at the decisive point. As theological knowledge it could be free. Bound to other concepts, even though incidentally for hermeneutical or apologetic reasons, it is unfree, and therefore an unfaithful half-knowledge estranged from itself and its object.⁶⁵

Again:

Theology has only to be theology at this point too. It has to be on its guard against unwittingly becoming philosophy. It has to accept the discipline of being wholly and exclusively theology.⁶⁶

How does it manifest itself as being wholly and exclusively theology [*ganz und ausschliesslich Theologie*]? That the name and concept of angels is among the means of grasping imaginatively what cannot be verified by the ordinary analogies of world history is as it should since we are dealing with a *sui generis* theological realm. But though it has no analogy in world history, but is rather represented by saga and legend, it does not follow that it does not possess its own distinctive form, its own *intelligere*. Indeed, it is this *intelligere* to which we should "confine" ourselves - "the *intelligere* which the Bible offers."⁶⁷ Even though the outlook of the biblical writers is stamped by an outdated mythology, "faith is confident that it will not be left in the lurch either hermeneutically or apologetically if it confines itself to [the biblical] witness."⁶⁸ Indeed "we are summoned to think and speak as they did, not without the divination, imagination and poetry which they found necessary in view of the fact that this history is continually engaged in that movement of transition, yet not with any divination, imagination, history and poetry, but like them with the divination, imagination and poetry which are ordered and filled with meaning and disciplined by this particular history. ... we are summoned

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 404.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 410.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 401.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 403.

to think with the true theological knowledge [*in echter theologischer Erkenntnis*]."⁶⁹ Though the *intelligere* is no species of common sense realist rationality (realism is not a necessary condition of rationality) it is rational - it is *sui generis* rational. It is a rationality befitting *sui generis* theological truth. Accordingly, such a rationality has nothing to say on a whole series of questions prompted by the typical realist mentality. It tells us nothing about "the much ventilated question of the "nature" of the angels, whether they are persons, or what is their relationship to the physical world and to space, their number and order, their creation, their original unity, their ensuing division into angels and demons, and many other things which later there was both the desire and a supposed ability to know."⁷⁰ Such questions may be the standard fare of a *science*, which is to say, a *non-theology* of angels, but they have no place in the realm of theological truth: there it doesn't make sense to pose the standard questions of origin and cause and effect.

According to the witness of the Old and New Testaments, to this revelation and work of God as the kingdom of heaven, and the angels as His heavenly messengers. They belong to it in a particular way, not as leading but as subsidiary characters, and these not as autonomous subjects but merging as it were into their function, which is wholly and exemplarily that of service. It is only in this way that they do belong to it. But in this way they do belong to it.⁷¹

Contra common sense realism, angels do not exist independently of our perception. But it is not merely that they disappear when Jesus Christ appears, it is that they do not exist independently of Him. They exist insofar as they do not exist when He is present. They are so to speak couriers who have gone ahead to proclaim the imminence of the theological realm. That is what makes them *angeli*, messengers of God. But Barth's point is that they themselves are the message. Accordingly, that they disappear when Jesus Christ appears is due to the fact that once their message is redundant, superfluous, they no longer "exist":

What angels are is to be understood wholly and exclusively from their function and activity. They are wholly and utterly angels, messengers. They are beings which are

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 377.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 410-11.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 372.

as they are engaged in the action thereby denoted. We grope in the void if we speak of a being of angels presupposed in this action and distinguishable from it We know them only in their action and service as God's messengers. [...] Naturally, we cannot deny or suppress the fact that angels exist. But we deny that they exist otherwise than in the execution of their office.⁷²

That is why they have no independent existence, are not independent characters; that is why their reality is such that they have no independent reality; that is why angelological statements are auxiliary. "There is no independent doctrine ... independent definition, depiction or account of angels They cannot be regarded as independent objects, nor constitute an independent theme."⁷³ Yet nonetheless they are to be apprehended as an "object of knowledge"⁷⁴ In other words, they display their own *sui generis* rationality: though "the angels cannot conduct themselves in accordance with what may be desired of them for the purposes of an orderly angelology, ... to be genuinely orderly an angelology must keep to the angels as they encounter us in the Bible, whether they fit in easily with our theories or not."⁷⁵

IV. "Quite So! There is No Room in the *Church Dogmatics* for Beings of That Sort!"

The wholesale irony that characterises Barth's response to Overbeck (and Feuerbach) - and angels ("Quite so, there is no room for beings of that sort!") - quietly emerges from the *Church Dogmatics* as a kind of Barthian signature⁷⁶ (a signature, it should be said, missing from the orthodox Barthian portrait), nominally encompassing the very things in Christian theology that liberal Protestantism of the nineteenth century felt duty bound to eradicate: the Resurrection, the Empty Tomb,

⁷² *Ibid*, 512.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 411.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 411.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 411.

⁷⁶ It is clear that between "The Strange New World Within the Bible" and the angelology of *CD III/3* it was Barth's reading of Overbeck that introduced the dialectical ironic turn present in Barth's thought from *Romans II* on.

the Virgin Birth etc. Again Barth was to reply "Quite so, there is no room for beings of that sort!", meaning the core lexicon of Christian theology as it had been appropriated by non-theology, instantiated in the realm of history [*Historie*] - and identity dissolved in the process. Instead, for Barth that same classical lexicon became the *sin qua non* of Christian theology - and therefore was to be sharply distinguished from their *doppelgänger* yet twilight zone counterparts in the non-theological (historical) lexicon subsequently rubbed out from the language of modernity and consigned to myth.

For if the refusal to speak of angels meant a refusal to entertain theological truth, then how much more crisis-ridden became the situation for *sui generis* theology if the other so-called "mythical" elements critical to the Christian story yet couched in the language of saga and legend - the Resurrection, the Empty Tomb, the Virgin Birth, etc. - were omitted. Refusal to talk about them (not their non-theological historical therefore twilight counterparts) was *ipso facto* to jettison theological truth altogether (there is no theological truth if the whole of biblical history is not engaged in that transition to saga or legend, which means that biblical history must have a constant bias toward this sphere); indeed it is even more essential that what is true for angels is heeded now: to eliminate such vocabulary, far from purifying and modernizing theology, was wholly to eschew the core vocabulary of talk about *God*. (In other words, such terms were the *sui generis* theological equivalent of the traditional philosophical theologian's metaphysical vocabulary.) Once more the resolution of the metatheological dilemma *via* theological truth and the Christocentrically conceived God is *God* was the agenda.

Here a casual remark Barth made takes on monumental ironic proportions: "The more clearly the biblical witnesses of Jesus Christ speak, the more what they say gets lost in what we should today call the realm of pure legend."⁷⁷ That is to say, contrary to our preconceptions, the clearest speech we have about Jesus Christ is "lost" in the realm of saga and legend, "lost", that is, in the realm of *sui generis*

⁷⁷ Barth, "*The Christian Understanding of Revelation*", *Against the Stream. Shorter Post-War Writings, 1946-52*, edited by R G Smith, (London, SCM press, 1954), 222.

theology,⁷⁸ and therefore "lost" in the resolution of Overbeck's (and Hume's) metatheological dilemma. This is Barth's wildest subversion of the historical Enlightenment.⁷⁹

Thus Barth can write of the death of Jesus Christ that

as the judgement of God, the event of Golgotha is exclusively the work of God. Its fulfilment is ordained by God even in detail. But all the same it has a component of human action - both obedient and good on the one hand and disobedient and evil on the other. In the light of this part we can say of the event of the cross that it has a "historical" character, that it can be understood and interpreted in the pragmatic context of human decisions and actions, although of course in this case it will be misinterpreted and misunderstood, and its real meaning will not be perceived.⁸⁰

In contrast:

The happening on the third day which followed that of Golgotha is the act of God with the same seriousness, but it is unequivocally marked off from the first happening by the fact that it does not have in the very least this component of human willing and activity. Not merely in purpose but in its fulfilment too, it is exclusively the act of God. It takes place quite outside the pragmatic context of human decisions and actions. It takes place in such a way that it cannot possibly be understood and interpreted, i.e., misunderstood and misinterpreted in the light of this context.⁸¹

⁷⁸ In *CD III/1*, Barth explicitly conjoins his sense of "theological" with "saga" and "legend". After claiming that the history of creation is by nature "non-historical" [*unhistorisch*] Barth continues: "By nature! When we say this we make *no* concessions. We are not adopting the verdict of an alien non-theological "historical criticism" but espousing a theological proposition." Barth, *CD III/1*, 79. In *III/2* he assimilates what he has to say about the Creation narratives to the resurrection appearances. *Ibid*, 446. In other words, what Barth has to say about the Creation narratives also applies to the saga and legend that is the resurrection narratives. In particular, when Barth speaks of the resurrection appearances, he avoids alien non-theological "historical criticism" and instead "espouses a theological proposition."

⁷⁹ It is noteworthy that Barth characterises the tendency to dismiss "saga" and "legend" as middle-class, *bourgeois*; to add insult to injury, he suggests that the cause of this habit is a chronic lack of imagination and that any complexes such a mind may harbour are dealt with by (Freudian?) suppression:

"We must dismiss and resist to the very last any idea of the inferiority or untrustworthiness or even worthlessness of a "non-historical" depiction and narration of history. This is in fact only a ridiculous and middle-class habit of the modern Western mind which is supremely phantastic in its chronic lack of imaginative phantasy, and hopes to rid itself of its complexes through suppression. This habit has really no claim to the dignity and validity which it pretends." Barth *CD III/1*, 81.

Indeed, far from being normal, it is the manifestation of an unhealthy (rigid) psyche raised by the mores of the historical Enlightenment. Barth touches on psychological and sociological issues developed by, e.g., Adorno and the Frankfurt school in their critique of that history.

⁸⁰ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 300.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 300.

Here again Barth is relentlessly dialectical and ironic. Where the historical Enlightenment deems the event of Golgotha assimilable to the extent that it can be interpreted within the context of human decision and action, it finds the same conceptual scheme unable to assimilate the resurrection and the appearances. Quite so! Where the historical Enlightenment understands the event of Golgotha it does not understand Easter. But not to understand Easter from the perspective of the context of human decision and action is an advance on understanding Golgotha from that same perspective. Where it misunderstands Golgotha it does not misunderstand Easter, which is to say, it does not even understand Easter in order to misunderstand!

Easter is the realm where theology comes into its own or does not make it into existence at all. But "The more clearly the biblical witnesses of Jesus Christ speak, the more what they say gets lost in what we should today call the realm of pure legend." The thought-forms of non-theology have no place here. Quite so! Indeed, outside of the context of the resolution of the metatheological dilemma, the more the historical Enlightenment assimilates the man Jesus to history-like modes and expressions the less clear is its talk about the man Jesus (the more what it says really gets lost). It is only from the midst of the resolution that such history-like modes of depiction become appropriate. Necessarily, saga and legend is the language of prototypical revelation, and prototypical revelation is the basis on which we know that the man Jesus is God/God is God.

V. The Human in the Midst of the "Utterly and Absolutely" *Sui Generis* Theological Realm.

From being merely in a world that is perpetually put into crisis by the "utterly and absolutely" *sui generis* theological, (*Romans* II), the human itself, (and by implication the world), is now in the midst of the "utterly and absolutely" theological. Though the history of the forty days and pre-Easter history "differ formally in the way in which they take place in the human sphere and human time,

and therefore in the way in which they have to be understood as history", ⁸² the sole epistemological interface between our human sphere and the *sui generis* theological realm is the realm of the exclusively "utterly and absolutely" ⁸³ *sui generis* theological. ⁸⁴ The history of the forty days is precisely where God and man meet. In other words, the biblical witnesses are inside the theological realm - though that does not mean they do not as it were reemerge to impinge exclusively on our world as apostles. It is where and only where the prototypical theological realm of the strange new world within the Bible can be seen to interface with the world (it is where and only where the question "What is it really that beats at the barrier and seeks entrance here?" can be answered with the words "*sui generis* theological truth"). Far from this being an obstacle to the theological enterprise (and therefore the latter a prime target for elimination), it is a necessary condition for the resolution of Overbeck's (and Hume's) metatheological dilemma. The very nature of *sui generis* truth means that it is there and only there that Overbeck's metatheological dilemma can be resolved.

We cannot read the Gospels without the strong impression that as we pass from the story of the passion to the story of Easter we are led into a historical sphere [*einen Geschichtsbereich*] of a different kind. It is striking that at the beginning of the evangelical narratives mention is made of the appearances and words of angels. ⁸⁵

⁸² *Ibid*, 334.

⁸³ Here the language of *Romans II* is deliberately evoked. Indeed, insofar as *Romans II* is a blueprint for the future *Church Dogmatics*, we can see that at the locus of the "utterly and absolutely" *sui generis* theological - the resurrection appearances, *Romans II* slowly but surely grows into the *Church Dogmatics* as the other *sui generis* elements of the Christian vocabulary are added - the empty tomb, the Virgin Birth, the Incarnation, etc.

⁸⁴ At this stage all Barth wants to presume is that the resurrection stories are not *contradictory*. There is a depiction of: Jesus Christ eating food like an ordinary human being. Barth, *CD IV/1*, 352; Jesus disappearing and appearing as if through walls, *Ibid*, 144; the presence of angels, Barth *CD III/3* 369passim, the presence of flesh and blood disciples and witnesses, Barth *CD IV/1* and *IV/2*; Thomas addressing Him with the words, "My Lord and my God" Barth, *CD IV/2*, 147. The elements of saga and legend co-exist with a story about a man of flesh and blood (Barth, *CD III/2*, 447) without contradiction. Indeed for Barth the logical coherence of the Incarnation rests on the non-contradictoriness of these stories. See Ford, "Interpretation", 75. The question of the *truth* (in some sense) of the stories is a different matter altogether and is the subject of the later chapters of this thesis (chapters 5, 6 and 7).

⁸⁵ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 334. Indeed Barth writes *einen Geschichtsbereich anderer, eigener Art*, which could also be translated as *a historical sphere of another unique kind*. Whenever the Resurrected is to appear, or has appeared, there is the angelic presence: "It is to be noted that in exact

The presence of angels rather than their message is itself the message. They merge into their function. Here I mention the fact that Barth leaves undecided the question: "Was Mozart perhaps an angel?"⁸⁶ For just as Mozart's music is *sui generis* music then so too is the realm angels herald. And though Mozart's music has no message, it itself is, if you like, the message. Hence the reason Barth is undecided on the question of Mozart's angelic identity is that he cannot entirely dismiss the thought of Mozart the angel and his music singing the praises of God as in Luke 2.13,⁸⁷ proclaiming (parabolically), in the music itself, the proximity of a *sui generis* theological realm, the imminence of the kingdom of God.⁸⁸ Nowhere does Mozart's unique angelic presence better mark the proximity of the *sui generis* theological to the non-theological than at the "history" of the forty days. If it were at a juncture where history merely passes into history, i.e history apprehendable by historical criticism, and not into saga and legend (and therefore *sui generis* theological truth) then God reveals Himself as God would be non-theological and therefore not about *God* at all; there would be no *sui generis* theological truth and no possibility of theology "in and for itself". In other words, angelology is not only, for pedagogical reasons, the best place to introduce students to Barth, it is instrumental in distinguishing the sole epistemological point of contact of the theological with the non-theological (the point of contact without which any further knowledge of the realm and its existence is impossible). That is to say, in the sense in which there is an "epistemological" point of contact between the resurrection appearances and the non-theological, there is no such "epistemological" point of contact between the Virgin Birth or the Empty Tomb and the non-theological.

correspondence to their appearances before and after the birth of Jesus, and also to the position and function in the whole context of the record, they again appear at the beginning and end of this part of the tradition. Whenever the Resurrected Himself appears - and His appearances form the heart of the presentation - there is no mention of angels. They are visible and audible as witnesses before and after He Himself is seen and heard and touched by His own." Barth, *CD III/3*, 507.

⁸⁶ Barth "Mozart", 72.

⁸⁷ See Barth, *CD III/3*, 447ff, 474, 491, for Barth's commentary on *Luke 2.13*.

⁸⁸ See #170 of chapter 2 of this thesis, where Barth describes Mozart's music as the parable of the kingdom of God.

VI. Jesus in the Mode of God: *Church Dogmatics* III/2.

At the locus (coordinates x, y, z) instantiated by Emmaus, Galilee, and Jerusalem,⁸⁹ the statement "My Lord and my God" reverberates throughout the *Church Dogmatics*:

... in *Jn. 20.28* Thomas makes a confession which we do not find anywhere else in the New Testament: "My Lord and my God".⁹⁰

Just how important it is to the theological realm can be gauged by the fact that this is where and where alone it is to be uttered. That "My Lord and my God" is only said there implies that it cannot be said anywhere else in the realm without first having been said there (indeed cannot be said anywhere else at all - inside or outside the realm). Indeed, for the person who has not uttered it there, the theological realm, whatever he or she says, cannot exist for them. Indeed, all their theology is non-theology and it is as if the theological realm does not exist at all.

In *CD* III/2 Barth makes the vital assertion of unity between the man Jesus and God: the man Jesus Christ reveals Himself as God:

What is the implication of the fact that after He had completed His span from birth to death He had this subsequent time? The answer is that the particular content of the particular recollection of this particular time of the apostolic community consisted in the fact that in this time the man Jesus was manifested among them in the mode of God [*in der Weise Gottes*]. It is essential to a true understanding

⁸⁹ See Barth, *CD* I/1, 326-31: "Thus even if according to the standards of modern historiography it does in certain instances, having no interest in this regard, commit "errors" in what it says about the time and place, the important thing is not the more or less "correct" content but the very fact of these statements." Barth continues: "This fact that the Bible in both the Old Testament and the New does continually and with notable emphasis make chronological and topographical statements, that it thus wishes in each instance to ascribe a set place in time and space to the divine revelation which it records, that the recorded processes in which revelation comes to men are put in the setting of other events at the same time and in the same place, that ancient Egypt, Assyria and Babylon come into view on the horizon of the experiences of the people of Israel, that Cyrenius the governor of Syria cannot be left out of the Christmas story and Pontius Pilate has an authentic place in the Creed - all this signifies that when the Bible gives an account of revelation it means to narrate history, i.e., not to tell of a relation between God and man that exists generally in every time and place and that is always in process, but to tell of an event that takes place there and only there, then and only then, between God and certain very specific men." *Ibid*, 326. Moreover, in *CD* III/2 Barth writes: "These parallels are sufficient to show that the forty days are not to be taken literally but typically" Barth, *CD* III/2, 452. Note the distinction: *typically* not literally. Indeed, what Barth means is: *prototypically* not literally.

⁹⁰ Barth, *IV*/2, 147.

that both his humanity and his deity should be kept in view.⁹¹

And subsequent to a passage designed to refute a docetic understanding of the resurrection appearances Barth continues:

But it is equally important to note that the man Jesus appeared to them during these days in the mode of God. During this period they came to see that He had always been present among them in His deity, though hitherto His deity had been veiled.⁹²

Hence:

They now recalled these preliminary manifestations of glory which they had already witnessed during His earthly life, but with unseeing eyes, and which now, in the light of what took place in these days, acquired for them the particular import which they had always had in themselves, though hidden from them.⁹³

He then turns to speaking of the resurrection appearances again:

Now they actually beheld his glory. During these forty days the presence [*Gegenwart*] of God in the presence of the man Jesus was no longer a paradox..."God was in Christ" (2 Cor 5.19) - this was the truth which dawned upon the disciples during the forty days.⁹⁴

And in contrast to His pre-easter existence:

He was not both veiled and manifest, both manifest and veiled, in Christ. He had been veiled, but He was now wholly and unequivocally and irrevocably manifest.⁹⁵

Barth concludes by putting the seal on an unambiguous understanding of the resurrection appearances:

In and with the presence of the man Jesus during this time, in the unique circumstances of the forty days, a decision is taken between the belief and unbelief of His disciples. There takes place for them the total, final, irrevocable and eternal manifestation of God Himself. God Himself, the object and ground of their faith, was present as the man Jesus was present in this way. That this is really took place is the specific content of the apostolic recollection of these days.⁹⁶

⁹¹ Barth, *CD* III/2, 448.

⁹² *Ibid*, 448.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 448-9.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 449.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 449.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 449. To be "manifest in the mode of God" (*Ibid*, 451) means for Barth that: "the Jesus who three days earlier had been rejected by the Jews and put to death by the Gentiles and buried by his disciples was among them again as a living man to his disciples. [...] He was then the concrete demonstration of the God who not only has authority over man's life and death, but also wills to deliver him from death. [...] Everything had to happen as it actually did according to the Easter story

Jesus's Godness is no longer a paradox; it is now completely unveiled and manifest - it is not both veiled and unveiled. Indeed this is no less than the content of *prototypical revelation*.

VII. *God reveals Himself and God reveals Himself.*

The *Church Dogmatics* was, as its name indicates, cast in a dogmatic structure. As is well known, Barth relates it was his encounter with Heppe's *Dogmatics* in 1924 which pushed him in this direction. By 1930 he had elected to divide what was to be known as the *Church Dogmatics* into five parts:⁹⁷ I Prolegomena to Dogmatics; II The Doctrine of God; III The Doctrine of Creation; IV The Doctrine of Reconciliation; V The Doctrine of Redemption. The envisaged work turned out to be a monumental undertaking. Even allowing for his unflagging industry over a period of some thirty years, Barth could not complete it. What we have of the *Church Dogmatics* is minus the fourth part of the fourth volume and all of the proposed fifth. But that is still twelve volumes and over nine thousand pages! That Barth anticipated the likely length of his campaign at the outset is not in doubt. At the close of the preface to I/1 he wrote:

I need not say that I shall have to have many years to carry out the plan as now envisaged. And all sensible people will realise that in a matter of such wide prospect I cannot commit myself by detailed pronouncements in the light of my preliminary work, but must ask them to believe, on the basis of the indications given, that I do at least know what I am after.⁹⁸

Here we also perceive that he - sensibly - protected himself against any future charge of inconsistency where a statement of overt repudiation had been omitted.

in its simple literal sense. This, the Revealer of His hidden glory as God's eternal Word incarnate, is what Jesus was in His real and therefore physical resurrection from the dead, in His appearances as the One who was really and therefore physically resurrected." (*Ibid*, 450-451). This explains why, during the pre-Easter period, the man Jesus was not apprehended as who he was then, God incarnate (why he was not "manifest in the mode of God"). For it goes without saying that what happened "according to the Easter story" did not happen during the pre-Easter history; and since Barth postulates a necessary identity between what happened according to the Easter story and the man Jesus "manifested in the mode of the God", it follows that the pre-Easter history was necessarily *not* identical with Jesus "manifest in the mode of God".

⁹⁷ McCormack, "Scholastic", 549.

⁹⁸ Barth, *CD I/1*, xvii.

Even though as he put it himself, the *Prolegomena* was to be a preliminary leap in to the subject-matter of the *Dogmatics* itself, it could not be vouchsafed that Barth would endorse the direction he had taken with his preliminary leap.

Ceteris paribus there is thus an initial bias in the mind of those looking for the fundamentals of Barth's thought toward looking at the later volumes of the *Church Dogmatics*. For if there is complete continuity between *Prolegomena* and *Dogmatics* proper, then at the very least no inconsistent insights would have been introduced and at best all the insights of the former would have been reproduced in the latter. And if there is discontinuity, the earlier thoughts will effectively have been superseded by the latter. It was to be entirely expected, then, that Barth would say in the foreword to *CD IV/1*:

I have been very conscious of the very special responsibility laid on the theologian at this centre of all Christian knowledge. To fail here is to fail everywhere. To be on the right track here makes it impossible to be completely mistaken in the whole.⁹⁹

That the later volumes of the *Church Dogmatics* do confirm the preliminary leap of *I/1* is vouchsafed by the continued presence of certain fundamental theses of the first half-volume of the *Dogmatics* prototypically (and Christocentrically) instantiated in *IV/2*. The theses in question are asserted as the answer component of a simple question-answer dialectic:

Who reveals Himself? How does it come about, how is it actual, that this God reveals Himself? What is the result? (What does this event do to them to whom it happens?)

The answer is:

God reveals Himself. He reveals Himself *through Himself*. He reveals *Himself*.¹⁰⁰

For reasons that will become apparent in chapter 8, it is the first and the third

⁹⁹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, ix. Further corroboration that one ought to look to Barth's Doctrine of Reconciliation as the centre of his thought comes in his discussion on Dogmatic loci in *CD I/2*. Even though he is against the idea of a systematic centre, he considers the doctrine of Reconciliation to be the real actual centre of dogmatics. See Barth, *CD I/2*, 882. See also Sykes, "The Centre of Barth's Theology", in Sykes (ed), *Karl Barth: Studies of His Theological Method* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1979), 17-54.

¹⁰⁰ Barth *CD I/1*, 295-6. For a clear-headed exposition of the three-fold nature of revelation as the root of the Barth's doctrine of the Trinity, see Jenson, *God After God: the God of the Past and the God of the Future, seen in the work of Karl Barth* (Indianapolis and New York, Bobbs-Merrill, 1969), 95-122.

"moments" of Barth's doctrine of revelation that concern us at present: *God* reveals Himself and God reveals *Himself*. In what way are these moments vindicated by the "preliminary leap into the subject-matter itself"?

In his review of Eberhard Busch's biography of Barth Hans Frei wrote: "[For Barth] the whole substance of his theology could be mirrored in a distinct way in every one of its major, quasi-independent topics."¹⁰¹ That is, each doctrine ('topic') in Barth's dogmatic structure - the doctrine of God, Creation, Reconciliation - although distinct from one another, also mirrored one another. According to Frei what Barth's doctrines give us is the same thing under different descriptions. If Frei is right there is an architectonic dogmatic structure in Barth's *Church Dogmatics*, a series of mirror-structures superimposed on one another. If the substance of I/1 is the doctrine of revelation, how is this mirrored in the doctrine of Reconciliation? The answer is that there is a definite locus in the Gospel story from which Barth reads off *Jesus Christ* reveals Himself and Jesus Christ reveals *Himself*.

Prototypical revelation is the resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ. Barth introduces his reading of the resurrection stories with the observation that:

The event [the resurrection and ascension] of Jesus Christ consisted in a series of concrete encounters and short conversations between the risen Jesus and his disciples. In the tradition these encounters are always described as self-manifestations of Jesus in the strictest sense of the term. In this context self-manifestation means (1) that the execution and termination as well as the initiative lie entirely in His own hands and not in theirs. Their reaction is a normal one but it is to an action in whose origination and accomplishment they have no part at all. They have really encountered their Lord, he controls them but they do not control Him. Self-manifestation means (2) that the meaning and purpose of these encounters consists simply and exhaustively in the fact that the risen Christ declares Himself to them in His identity with the One previously followed and who had died on the cross and been buried.¹⁰²

(1) The first mode of Jesus Christ reveals Himself: *Jesus Christ* reveals Himself (and no one else or other thing does e.g. not nature nor human beings). Barth observes that:

... It is to be noted that we are nowhere told that the disciples sought, found, or even expected Jesus. But "Jesus came" (*John* 20.24). "Jesus Himself drew near and went with them" (*Luke* 24.15). He "met" the women (*Matthew* 28.9). He "stood in

¹⁰¹ Frei, "Busch", 110.

¹⁰² Barth, *CD IV/2*, 143-144.

the midst of his disciples" (*Luke 24.36; John 20.19,26*). He "stood on the shore of the sea of Tiberias" (*John 21.4*). It is never explained where He came from or how He came (a point which is underlined by the mention of the closed doors in *John 20.19, 26*). He is always uninvited and unexpected. He really comes as a "thief in the night" (*Matthew 24.43; 1 Thessalonians 5.2*) The word ... used three times in *1 Corinthians 15.5f* (and also in *Luke 24.34*) definitely means sensual perception. That is why we read in *John 20.14* that Mary Magdalene "turned herself back and saw Jesus standing"; or in *Matthew 28.17* that "they saw him". But again, his perception is not as simple as all that. He can be perceived only as He comes. And whether or not they see him effectively is not under their own control Jesus was certainly seen and heard by those who went to Emmaus, but at first he was not recognised as Jesus Even Mary Magdalene saw and heard Him without realising that it was Jesus (*John 20.14*). and the disciples by the sea-shore "knew not that it was Jesus" (*John 21.4*) ... when their eyes are open, when there is the seeing and hearing of recognition ... (*Luke 24.31*); "We have seen the Lord" (*John 20.25*); "It is the Lord" (*John 21.7*) - the possibility and freedom for this always seemed to be given them by Jesus himself. Everywhere and especially in *1 Corinthians 15.5f* it is finally presupposed that there is no longer any question of a continuous companionship of Jesus with his disciples, but always of individual encounters with them which he himself both began and terminated. In *Luke 24.31* we are told that ... "He vanished out of their sight" and the ascension itself has this character of a termination of one of these encounters, the final one, and therefore of the whole event ... (*Luke 24.51*).¹⁰³

(2) If Barth's objective is to ground his theological statements in Scripture through biblical exegesis (the former are in reality paraphrases of the latter), then accordingly he continues the excursus to textualise: Jesus Christ reveals *Himself*:

... the question how [the disciples and followers of Jesus] came to recognise Him when they saw and heard Him is rather strangely answered - although not with equal definiteness - by the radical assertion that He was known as the One who had been among them before and was then crucified dead and buried. [...] What the Evangelists really know and say is simply that the disciples saw and heard Jesus after his death, and that as they saw and heard Him, they recognised Him, and that they recognised Him on the basis of his identity with the One whom they had known before. And they say this because it seems to be their particular intention to say it. The disciples who went to Emmaus say that He was known by them ... ["in the breaking of the bread"] (*Luke 24.35*). And Luke tells us that "as he sat at with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them" (*Luke 24.30*). But even to the very words and order this is exactly what had happened at the last supper and the earlier feeding of the five and four thousand. In the ensuing appearance to the eleven recognition comes when he allows them to see and touch his hands and feet (*Luke 24.29*). In *John 20.20, 25, 27*, where there is also a reference to the touching of His side, this is rightly to mean that He gave himself to be known by them as the Crucified. Mary Magdalene recognises him simply by the fact - obviously not for the first time - He calls her by her name (*John*

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 144.

20.16).¹⁰⁴

The cumulative logic of the above adds up to *God* reveals Himself as *God*: (i) Jesus Christ reveals Himself as God ('Very God and Very Man) (ii) *God* reveals Himself and God reveals *Himself* (iii) *Jesus Christ* reveals Himself and Jesus Christ reveals *Himself*. Accordingly, the resurrection stories are the prototypical language of *God* reveals Himself as *God*. Thus the prototypical language of prototypical revelation is saga and legend, the language of the exclusively *sui generis* theological realm. Moreover, not only does Barth's concept of revelation as the root of the doctrine of the Trinity exclude *vestigia trinitatis* and natural theology, it excludes non-theology.

VIII. The Prototypical Witnesses.

The doctrine of election¹⁰⁵ and the doctrine of sin¹⁰⁶ are two examples of Barth's typological analysis introducing ordinary *homo sapientia* into the Christian story. But first and foremost on epistemological grounds must come the prototypical witnesses of prototypical revelation.

Though Paul is not quite an Apostle proper he is in Barth's theology designated the role of premier typical witness, that is, to say in relation to the prototypical witnesses Paul is the first typical witness.¹⁰⁷ The revelation of Jesus Christ to Paul though not quite prototypical revelation (it occurs outwith the Forty Days schema)¹⁰⁸ is precisely a revelation that instantiates Paul into a history in which he too has Crucified (persecuted) Christ, a history in which he too knows

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 144-145. It is clear that Barth treats the ascension appearances in a similar manner to the stories in the above passage:

"[what] is revealed in the ascension is again a hidden thing that was true and actual before, in his whole history and existence as son of God and Son of Man as it found fulfilment in his crucifixion. As the Gospel of John has it, his exaltation on the cross was also his exaltation to the Father." *Ibid*, 154.

¹⁰⁵ See Barth, *CD II/2*, 458-506; see also Ford "Interpretation", 65-67.

¹⁰⁶ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 398-399

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 336.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 334.

Him (knows His identity) 'after the flesh'. Paul is the 'prototypical' typical witness.

Beyond Paul the Church are typical witnesses. The theological realm also encompasses us, which is to say, we have a place in the Gospel story. Where there is a vertical (revealed) identity between Jesus Christ and God, there is a horizontal identity (encompassing the classical spatial and temporal parameters) between the biblical witnesses and the Church through the ages. At any one time, we, as it were, concentrically coincide with the locus of the biblical witness. Jesus Christ's resurrection appearances are prototypical revelation - Jesus Christ is prototypical God. The biblical witnesses are the prototypical "us" or alternatively, they are the prototypical witnesses encountering the man Jesus as God, for example on the road to Emmaus, which is to say, at the junction between the theological and the non-theological realm.

Jesus Christ in his self-revelation is ... the basis text which was already read and expounded by the Apostles, which they attested as its direct witness, by the symbols and theology of the Church, and finally by ourselves.¹⁰⁹

Though Barth includes Old Testament prophets in the category of biblical witnesses, the prototypical *imitatio testari* is the apostolic witness. After speaking of the Old Testament canon Barth turns to the New Testament: "Nevertheless, theology must focus its attention on the goal of the history of Israel, of the prophetic Word spoken in this history, on the history of Jesus Christ as it is witnessed to by the apostolic men of the New Testament."¹¹⁰ As Barth puts it in *Evangelical Theology*:

The apostles spoke, told, wrote and preached about Jesus as men who were in this way directly illumined and instructed. They spoke as men who had behind them the empty tomb and before them the living Jesus.¹¹¹

That is why "Dogmatics must have a biblical character" wrote Barth.¹¹² And he goes on to define this character soon after making this statement. We are to enter

¹⁰⁹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 122.

¹¹⁰ Barth, *Evangelical Theology: an Introduction*, translated by G Goley, (London, SCM Press, 1963), 28.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 29.

¹¹² Barth *CD I/2*, 816.

into 'kinship' with the biblical witnesses, which is to say, we are to 'imitate' them.

The relation is one of type to prototype:

We call it "biblical" because it has its prototype and exemplar in the attitude of the biblical witnesses themselves, because it consists in the regard for and the imitation of this prototype, that is, in the institution of a kinship between the outlook, approach and method of the biblical writers and those of the Church preacher and therefore of the dogmatician. The teaching Church cannot listen afresh to the Word of God except in a fresh adoption of this biblical attitude. It is therefore called to adopt this attitude *in concreto*, when it is called to listen again to the Word of God.¹¹³

In other words, the prototype for our attitude to the revelation of God is the attitude of the prototypical witness to prototypical revelation: "By the attitude of the biblical witnesses we mean that orientation of their thinking and speaking which is still that of witnesses to the revelation of God"¹¹⁴

Thus it is no surprise Barth perceived the significance of the hymns of Abel Burckhardt - which he was taught as a child and which simply retold Gospel stories in local dialect - in prototypical terms:

I must interpose at this point a small but sincerely grateful tribute. It is to a theologian who cannot be called great, but to whom I am greatly indebted. I refer to Abel Burckhardt who a hundred years ago - a contemporary of the more famous Jacob Burckhardt - was the second pastor at the minster here in Basel. He composed and edited a collection of songs for children in the local dialect. This was the text book in which at the beginning of the last decade of the last century, I received my first theological instruction in a form appropriate to my then immaturity. And what made an indelible impression on me was the homely naturalness with which these very modest compositions spoke of the events of Christmas, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter, the Ascension and Pentecost as things which might take place any day in Basel or its environs like any other important happenings. History? Doctrine? Dogma? Myth? No - but things actually taking place, so that we could see and hear and lay up in our hearts. For as these songs were sung in the everyday language we were then beginning to hear and speak, and as we joined in singing we took our mother's hand, as it were, and went to the still at Bethlehem, and to the streets of Jerusalem where, greeted by children of a similar age, the Saviour made His entry, and to the dark hill of Golgotha, and as the sun rose to the garden of Joseph. Was this representation, like the unbloody repetition of the sacrifice of Christ in the Roman doctrine of the Mass? Was it the kind of faith which in that rather convulsive doctrine is supposed to consist in re-enactment of the crucifixion of Christ on our own existence? Again, no. It was all present without needing to be made present. The yawning chasm of Lessing did not exist. The contemporaneity of Kierkegaard was not a problem. The Saviour Himself was obviously the same yesterday and to-day. All very naive, and not worth mentioning in academic circles? Yes, it was very naive, but perhaps in the very

¹¹³ *Ibid*, 816-7.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 817.

naivety there lay the deepest wisdom and greatest power, so that once grasped it was calculated to carry one relatively unscathed - although not, of course, untempted or unassailed - through all the serried ranks of historicism and anti-historicism, mysticism and rationalism, orthodoxy, liberalism and existentialism, and to bring one back one day to the matter itself. As far as it was still possible in the nineteenth century, and not without an obvious influence of Pietism, good Abel Burckhardt stood firmly on the Older Christology, presumably of a moderate Reformed type. But, obviously, in all simplicity he had in fact overcome its deadness, and he gave us an impulse to overcome it again. For that reason - academic circles or not - he deserves to be mentioned in this connection.¹¹⁵

Barth wrote this in the first half of the nineteen-fifties. In the middle of the *Church Dogmatics* it was as if for a moment he had returned to his childhood; yet in doing so he had returned home, returned to 'the matter itself': *sui generis* theological truth. Neither Lessing's ditch nor Kierkegaard's contemporaneity nor historicism/anti-historicism had stood in the way of that.

IX. Excursus: Revelation: Neither Revealedness nor Veiling-Unveiling.

Prototypicality is the key to resolving the charge Bruce McCormack levels at Hans Frei, namely that he attributes to Barth a thesis of *revealedness* Barth explicitly repudiates.¹¹⁶ Frei forwards the view that Barth moved from a cognitivist theology in I/1 to a narrative theology in later volumes principally IV/1 and IV/2.¹¹⁷ This is simply not true. Every so-called cognitivist statement in I/1 is prototypically instantiated in IV/1 and IV/2. In particular, we have seen how the core doctrine of I/1, the doctrine of revelation, is prototypically instantiated in IV/2. Thus though narrative emerges in the later volumes of the *Church Dogmatics* it does not follow that Barth moves from, in other words, withdraws, his earlier position in I/1.

Yet McCormack errs in implying that *analogia fidei* is not reconcilable with narrative theology.¹¹⁸ To be sure, narrative is only one (perhaps even relatively

¹¹⁵ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 112-113.

¹¹⁶ McCormack, "Scholastic", 524.

¹¹⁷ Frei, "Busch", 112.

¹¹⁸ McCormack, Book Review, *Scottish Journal of Theology* 44 (1991), 262.

minor) aspect of Barth's theology. Yet at the locus where it can be said unquestionably to manifest itself - the necessary assignation of temporal structure to the Incarnation in Barth's interpretation of the Messianic Secret motif in IV/2 - *analogia fidei* is no less in force. There is no turn from analogy to narrative: the use of narrative (implicit in the necessary assignation of temporal structure) remains governed by the *analogia fidei*.

Thus though Barth did not ever advocate revealedness, it is evident from III/2 that the veiling-unveiling dialectic is disjoined from prototypical revelation, a point Barth is at pains to make in the passages quoted above from III/2. (However it does not follow that Barth did away with dialectic *per se*. Pace von Balthasar, Frei and Jüngel, there is no turn to analogy. It is simply that the dialectic is not a veiling-unveiling one.) Everything McCormack asserts about Barth's interpretation of the *analogia fidei* is now reinterpreted prototypically. For example, McCormack asserts that "analogy of faith refers to the highly actualistic conformity of human language to the divine object Human language has no inherent capacity for divine revelation."¹¹⁹ Elsewhere he writes: "Human language (including the language of the Bible) has no intrinsic capacity for bearing witness to God."¹²⁰

All of these insights are now prototypically embodied in the encounter between prototypical revelation (without the veiling-unveiling dialectic) and the prototypical witnesses:

As applied to Jesus Christ we can legitimately call the term "Son of God" a true but inadequate and inadequate but true insight and statement. This means that on the one side we can be sure that the term as applied in this way does apply to its object, that it does express it, that it is therefore true, that it tells us what Jesus Christ in fact is. We have no better term, and this one forces itself necessarily on us. From the standpoint from which we have tried to understand Jesus Christ it is very suitable and indeed indispensable if we are to say what has to be said concerning his Deity. It is quite right that it should have acquired its very particular importance and role in the New Testament and in the language of the later Church. It confesses the final thing we have to confess of Him, and therefore necessarily it takes the first place. But it confesses it in the way that we men can confess the mystery to which it points. As a true description of Jesus Christ, it goes far beyond anything that it can say in any other application. As applied to this "Son" it is in a certain sense burst wide open, and can be thought through to the end only as we

¹¹⁹ McCormack, "Scholastic", 554.

¹²⁰ McCormack, Book Review, *Scottish Journal of Theology* 44 (1991), 262.

bring to it meanings which it cannot have in any other use which we can make of it. As applied in this way it deserves our every confidence because it is true, but it must be used with great reserve because of its inadequacy. And is it not fitting that the true deity of the One who is obedient in humility, of the Son who is in this way the only begotten Son of the Father, wills to be known and can be known only in this way - with every confidence but also with great modesty? For in this matter, as others, what can all our Christian statements be but a serious pointing away to the One who will Himself tell those who have ears to hear who He is?¹²¹

In other words, there is little doubt that Barth's vocabulary here - "a true but inadequate and inadequate but true insight and statement", etc. - prototypically recapitulates the language of *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*¹²² and *Church Dogmatics* II/1,¹²³ which latter especially McCormack relies on in his interpretation. Thomas's utterance "My Lord and My God" is also subject to this rule. In other words, prototypical revelation (Jesus Christ's resurrection appearances) is prototypical actualism, i.e., without revealedness - *and* without the veiling-unveiling dialectic.

Finally, prototypicality does not imply that, since the occurrence of prototypical revelation, language has been given a once and for all capacity to be a bearer of revelation. Quite the reverse: we can only talk about God to the extent that we enter into the Gospel story prototypically instantiated by the prototypical witnesses. That of necessity preserves the actualistic nature of revelation in the encounter between revelation and us.

X. The Uni-Directional Epistemological Architectonic of Logic: the Empty tomb, the Incarnation, the Virgin Birth.

To categorise prototypical revelation as historical [*historisch*] (or psychological) is *ipso facto* not only to assimilate it to a species of non-theology, it is to assimilate the whole of theology to non-theology. This is the full import of Barth's statement that academic theology (rather, academic *theology*) is based upon

¹²¹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 210.

¹²² Barth, *FQI*, 29-30.

¹²³ Barth, *CD II/1*, 224f.

Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead.¹²⁴ That is to say, not only is the prototypical instantiation of knowledge of it a necessary condition of the resolution of the metatheological dilemma - not only is it a necessary condition in the sense that without it one could not speak of the empty tomb, the Incarnation, the Virgin Birth etc. - it is a sufficient condition of the resolution. No other exclusively *sui generis* element of the realm is independent of the exclusively *sui generis* theological realm that is prototypical revelation. Epistemologically, it supervenes over all the rest. There is a uni-directional epistemological architectonic of logic from the saga or legend of the prototypical revelation - *God* reveals Himself as *God* - to the saga or legend of the Incarnation, the Virgin Birth, the Empty Tomb.¹²⁵ The one Word Jesus Christ entails Empty Tomb, Virgin Birth, angels, etc.. They are entailed by, are part of the *meaning* of, Jesus Christ. The *sui generis* theological realm means Jesus Christ.

Accordingly Barth affirms a *sui generis* theological realm in which there is no logical space for the methodological tools of the non-theological - historical criticism, philosophical empiricism, anthropological cross-cultural comparisons, abstraction of psychological universals, etc. - even to co-exist in vestigial form far less be a natural and logical concomitant of the theological. Barth from beginning to end (the length and breadth of the theological realm) remains a theologian who demarcates theology from history in particular but also from other realms of the non-theological - anthropology, psychology and philosophy etc. Thus in Barth's analysis historical criticism never intervenes between prototypical revelation and: the empty tomb, the Incarnation, the Virgin Birth.

¹²⁴ Although the resurrection and the resurrection appearances are not the same thing, that Barth assimilates the one to the other in respect of their ontological nature (and their corresponding *unhistorical* nature) can be deduced from the following statement: "As I see it, these are the decisive reasons why, in spite of Bultmann, we must still accept the resurrection of Jesus, and His subsequent appearances to His disciples, as genuine history in its own particular time." Barth, *CD III/2*, 447.

¹²⁵ I do not take issue with Torrance's contention that in the *Church Dogmatics* Barth's theological conceptions were not *logically* but *ontologically* derived" Torrance, *Biblical*, 228. Yet the *sui generis* rationality of, e.g., the Virgin Birth notwithstanding, there is a sense in which it is logically (noetically though not nominalistically) derived; as opposed to the Incarnation which is ontologically derived.

(a) The Empty Tomb

The appearances during the Forty Days are the prototypical instantiation of the "living Jesus" (the living God); as a necessary ancillary accompaniment there is the "legend" of the empty tomb.

The "legend" of the finding of the empty tomb is not of itself and as such the attestation of Jesus Christ as He showed Himself alive after His death. It is ancillary to this attestation. The one can be as little verified "historically" as the other. Certainly the empty tomb cannot serve as an "historical" proof. It cannot be proclaimed and believed for itself but only in the context [*Zusammenhang*] of the attestation.¹²⁶

Prototypically "context" means prototypical revelation. That is why the "legend" is not "of itself and as such the attestation of" the Risen Christ.¹²⁷

In other words, the empty tomb is not a "historical" concept because it is a *sui generis* theological concept. It is an irreducible holistic concept. In other words, there is no tomb in the *sui generis* theological realm that is not an empty tomb. Conversely, the only factual empty tomb is outside the *sui generis* theological realm - living a *doppelgänger* twilight zone existence in the non-theological (historical) lexicon subsequently consigned to myth by modernity!¹²⁸ (Thus contrary to an apparent 'empirical' propensity, the empty tomb is no less *sui generis* theological than the Virgin Birth; contrary to appearance, the former belongs to exactly the same conceptual category (saga) as the latter). Thus to say that the context of the attestation of prototypical revelation implies an empty tomb is not to say that a factual empty tomb is a necessary condition of prototypical revelation. In other

¹²⁶ Barth, *CD* IV/1, 341.

¹²⁷ This passage is in itself a sufficient condition for demonstrating the invalidity of Hunsinger's position that the "extratextual referent of the tomb" is not therefore a factual empty tomb, as hermeneutical literalism would suppose, but rather the risen Christ himself." G Hunsinger, "Beyond Literalism and Expressivism: Karl Barth's Hermeneutical Realism", *Modern Theology* 3: 3 (1987), 211.

¹²⁸ Hunsinger's mistake of thinking that the extratextual referent of 'empty tomb' is the living Jesus leads him to compound his initial error: "However, since the risen Christ did not, according to Barth's interpretation, rise without his body, it would appear that as if some further, though secondary, extratextual referent were implied. For although Barth did not develop the point, would not his interpretation seem to entail a referent, if not a factual empty tomb (whose story might well be legend), at least something analogous to it, in effect its virtual equivalent?" *Ibid*, 211. Barth did not develop the point because he had already developed another point completely contrary to this one.

words, the empty tomb in the context of attestation is an *analytic* concept.¹²⁹ Epistemologically this means that

The statement that Christ is risen necessarily implies [*impliziert*] the assertion that a dead man is alive again and that his grave is empty. But it only implies it. If we abstract the latter assertions from the former we may accept them or we may deny or demythologise them, but either way they are irrelevant for an understanding of the texts and their witness. They cannot be considered as a basis of the knowledge of Jesus Christ - not even if we affirm them "historically."¹³⁰

It only implies an empty tomb. Affirming it "historically" is no less irrelevant than denying its "historicity" One can never reverse the logical dependence of the empty tomb on prototypical revelation.¹³¹ To make the truth of the latter depend in some empirical sense on the former is *ipso facto* to be speaking of other than that which the texts speak. The question "is/was the tomb empty?" makes no sense outside the context of prototypical revelation. But from that context the question is redundant since the tomb could not but be empty. That is the rationale behind characterising it as an analytic concept. "Empty tomb" has no normal referential status.

Christians do not believe in the empty tomb, but in the living Christ. This does not mean, however, that we can believe in the living Christ without believing in the empty tomb. Is it just a "legend"? What matter? It still refers to the phenomenon ensuing the resurrection, to the presupposition of the appearance of Jesus. Nevertheless rejection of the legend of the empty tomb has always been accompanied by rejection of the saga of the living Jesus, and necessarily so. Far better to admit that the empty tomb belongs to the Easter event as a sign.¹³²

¹²⁹ D Fergusson takes the view that "[h]istorical criticism therefore cannot verify the resurrection although it could conceivably falsify it. On such a view the empty tomb and the appearances are necessary but insufficient conditions for knowledge of the resurrection. This position ... is not without its advocates (it seems to be the position of Karl Barth in the *Church Dogmatics*)" D Fergusson, Review Article, *the Scottish Journal of Theology* 42 (1989), 454. But if *empty tomb* is an analytic concept, there is no question of a factually non-empty tomb falsifying the appearances.

¹³⁰ Barth, *CD IV/2* 149. Barth makes this observation in the midst of a passage designed to show that miracle is always *post facto*. As he himself puts it: "Always, however, it is the Lord Himself who is the centre of the picture, and not the miracle of His appearing (although this is emphasised too)." *Ibid*, 148.

¹³¹ Barth interprets the tradition as an inevitable deduction made in the context of prototypical revelation. The tradition of the empty tomb did not exist prior to prototypical revelation. *Ibid*, 132.

¹³² Barth *CD III/2*, 453. The legend of the empty tomb "is, in fact, an indispensable accompaniment of the attestation. It safeguards its content from misunderstanding in terms of a being of the Resurrected which is purely beyond or inward." Barth, *CD IV/1*, 341. In other words, prototypical revelation is safeguarded from a docetic (idealist and non-theological) interpretation.

What Christians believe in *is* the legend of the empty tomb. Barth talks of rejecting (or affirming) *a legend* - an inferred article of *sui generis theological truth* - not rejecting or affirming a factual (historical) empty tomb. This latter is irrelevant.

(b) The Incarnation

If the man Jesus reveals Himself as God it must follow that God became man without ceasing to be God. The Incarnation is perhaps the most indispensable doctrine in the whole history of Christian doctrine and the Church. For Barth the whole *raison-d'être* of the Gospels is to tell of "God With Us", of God made flesh, of God Incarnate. In this sense the Incarnation is the *raison d'être* of the resurrection appearances. The latter serve the former. The converse is not true. Jesus Christ is complete in Himself in His pre-Easter existence. Jesus Christ's self-revelation does not add anything else to his being. What it does is reveal who He had been all along. In this sense, the Incarnation is ontic; in relation to the Incarnation the resurrection appearances are merely noetic.¹³³ That said, without the resurrection appearances there would be no basis of knowledge of the Incarnation. Without them we would not know that Jesus Christ is God Incarnate.

God reveals Himself as *God* is sufficient epistemic basis for the Incarnation. According to Barth the context of the attestation of *God* reveals Himself as *God* - prototypical revelation - ontologically implies the actuality of the Incarnation. In other words, we cannot avoid drawing the conclusion that Jesus Christ is God Incarnate. Whether subsequent to this we can work out a consistent rational doctrine of how this is possible is subordinate to the fact of its actuality. It is the Church and its theologians who later take up the question of its possibility. Naturally, Barth's own doctrine of the Incarnation belongs to this tradition.¹³⁴

In becoming flesh God does not cease to be who He is.¹³⁵ From this it

¹³³ Barth *CD IV/2*, 122.

¹³⁴ The essentials of Barth's doctrine of the Incarnation are to be found in *CD IV/1*, 157-210 and *CD IV/2*, 20-116. It constitutes the essential doctrine of the Doctrine of Reconciliation.

¹³⁵ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 179-180.

follows that neither noetically, logically, nor ontically is there either paradox, cleft, rift or gulf in God in his becoming flesh.¹³⁶ Moreover, it will logically follow that in Him there is no paradox, no antinomy, no division, no inconsistency, not even the possibility of it.¹³⁷ All these observations are in fact implicitly combined in the one statement which goes as follows:

Who God is and what it is to be divine is something we have to learn where God has revealed Himself and His nature, the essence of the divine. And if He has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ as the God who does this, it is not for us to be wiser than He and to say that it is in contradiction with the divine essence.¹³⁸

Indeed, Barth's position is not only that it is rational to affirm the Incarnation but that it would be irrational - whether one is intellectually comfortable with this or not - to derive any statement *contradictory* to that asserting Jesus Christ is God incarnate.

Having reached the point where one has derived the actuality of the Incarnation from the stand-point of prototypical revelation, Barth can now proceed to the subordinate question of how the Incarnation is possible. This task consists of working out a consistent rational doctrine of how such a thing is possible. For this purpose Barth takes recourse to a doctrine of the early Church, the doctrine of the *anhypostasis-enhypostasis*. The *anhypostasis-enhypostasis* doctrine "follows" from "the utter uniqueness of this unity of divine and human nature."¹³⁹

Barth's appropriation of the Christological doctrine of the *anhypostasis-enhypostasis* is motivated by his desire to articulate a *sui generis* theological realm belonging to "theology in and for itself". His appropriation of this doctrine cannot be understood outside of the context of Hume's dilemma and Overbeck's articulation of its consequences for theology. In other words, it is a misconception to think of Barth's appropriation of the *anhypostasis-enhypostasis* along the dimension high/low Christology. The question for Barth is quite simply

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 184.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 186.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, 186.

¹³⁹ Barth, *CD I/2*, 163.

theology/non-theology. If low Christologies had satisfied the *sui generis* theological criterion Barth would have had no objection to them.¹⁴⁰

Just as God can become man without ceasing to be God Jesus Christ is also true man without ceasing to be God. Indeed, He is man only insofar as He is the Son of God.

Jesus Christ exists as a man because and as this One exists, because and as He makes human essence His own, adopting and exalting it into unity with His own. As a man, therefore, He exists directly in and with the One God in the mode of existence of His eternal Son and Logos - not otherwise and apart from this mode.¹⁴¹

The *anhypostasis* maintains that in Jesus Christ we do not have to do with a man into whom God has changed Himself but unchanged and directly [*unverwandelt und unmittelbar*] with God Himself;¹⁴² no less than the unity in which as man He is Son of God and as the Son of God man.¹⁴³ He is a real man only as the Son of God. Barth also holds that with the *anhypostasis* the following is the case. Just as God becomes man without ceasing to be God then so in Jesus Christ we do not have to do with a changed man who loses his humanity.¹⁴⁴ He is true man who has his existence in and with the Son of God. Barth's commitment to this classical Christological doctrine is a corollary of a theological attitude that

¹⁴⁰ Whatever epistemic role the doctrine of the anhypostasis-ehypostasis played in the Göttingen Dogmatics, (see Barth, *The Gottingen Dogmatics: Instruction in the Christian Religion*, vol 1, edited by H Reiffen, translated by G W Bromiley, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1991), 90, 157, 163) and *CD I/2*, it is clear that it does not play it in the later volumes, *CD III/2* and *CD IV/2*. For there the sole epistemic role is assigned to the resurrection appearances. Barth, *CD III/2*, 447-9; Barth, *CD IV/1*, 333-341, Barth, *CD IV/2*, 131-154. That is why Barth asserts "that is why we give the resurrection appearances the prominence when it a question of the basis of knowledge in Christology." Barth, *CD IV/2*, 134. The doctrine of anhypostasis-ehypostasis is where it always is in Barth's theology and where it cannot but be: at the locus of the incarnation. One only has to check the locus of Barth's discussions of the doctrine in *III/2* and *IV/2* to confirm this. Certainly, the doctrine of the anhypostasis-ehypostasis goes back a long way in Barth's theology. As Bruce McCormack has demonstrated, it goes back to the *Gottingen Dogmatics* of 1924. See McCormack, "Scholastic", 316-336. From there it can be traced in the *Church Dogmatics* through *CD I/2*, 163-165 to *CD III/2*, 69-70 and finally to *CD IV/2*, 49-50, 92-93.

¹⁴¹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 49.

¹⁴² *Ibid*, 49.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, 49.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 41.

brings him down in principle on the side of the Reformed tradition with its emphasis on the *unio hypostaticum* and the *unio personalis* as against the Christology of Lutheran orthodoxy which put its emphasis on the *communio naturarum*.¹⁴⁵

Thus as Bruce McCormack puts it "every time Barth entered into a sixteenth/seventeenth debate on its own terms, he sided with the Reformed school."¹⁴⁶ But yet again, far from adopting a metaphysics,¹⁴⁷ Barth's motivation is no less than to preserve the *sui generis* theological realm from non-theology.¹⁴⁸

(c) The Virgin Birth

The grounds on which Barth affirms the Virgin Birth testify how simplistic it is to characterise him as a theologian whose justification of the articles of faith of the classical creeds is to appeal to a crude empirical understanding of sola scriptura. For Barth's reasons for affirming this doctrine are not the passages of Holy Scripture - Mt 1. 18-25 and Lk 1.26-35 - one might have expected a Biblically based theologian to cite as evidence. Nowhere does the uni-directional epistemological architectonic of logic from prototypical revelation to the Incarnation, the Virgin Birth, the Empty Tomb apply more than in the case of the Virgin Birth. Indeed it is the basis of such a logic that Barth will ride roughshod over the paucity of Scriptural (literary) evidence to enter the Virgin Birth into the vocabulary of *sui generis* theology.

For Barth the Virgin Birth is to be subsumed under what he calls the *quaestio facti* which cannot be answered either by literary or by dogmatic investigation.¹⁴⁹ Indeed Barth goes as far as to claim that such literary or dogmatic

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 66.

¹⁴⁶ McCormack, "Scholastic", 625.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 130-131.

¹⁴⁸ For Barth, since the content of revelation is *wholly God*, (Barth, *Göttingen Dogmatics*, 91) it must follow - logically follow - that the *person* of Christ's human nature (implying, as it does, the *unio personalis*) is the Logos of God: "The person of the God-man is exclusively the Word, the Logos of God." *Ibid*, 90.

¹⁴⁹ Barth, *CD I/2*, 177.

investigation should be undertaken *sub conditione facti*. This is why Barth acknowledges that "As regards the necessity of the dogma, we must begin with the admission that both in extent and form the grounds for the dogma in the statements of Holy Scripture are not at first sight so strong or so clear as one might wish for such a dogma in the strict sense of the term."¹⁵⁰

But no matter. It is logic which leads us unerringly to the Virgin Birth - not historical investigation (historical proof), nor Scriptural exegesis of the passages pertaining to this article of faith; it is logic which intervenes between the Incarnation and the Virgin Birth. Like the question of the incarnation, the Virgin Birth is a *quaestio facti*, though where the former is ontologically derived the latter is noetically derived. Indeed, the Virgin Birth is a *quaestio facti* answered on the basis of the actuality of the Incarnation.

The Virgin Birth is a corollary of the Incarnation and therefore indirectly a corollary of the resurrection appearances (where the legend of the empty tomb is a direct corollary of the latter). The Virgin Birth, like the empty tomb, is noetic rather than ontic.¹⁵¹ Just as the empty tomb stands as a sign in relation to the resurrection appearances then the Virgin Birth stands as a sign in relation to the Incarnation.¹⁵² Prototypical revelation only implies the empty tomb. The incarnation only implies the Virgin Birth. The concept of the empty tomb is an analytic one; the concept of the Virgin Birth is an analytic one. There is no Birth of Jesus that could have been other than a Virgin Birth. It is an analytic truth though one that can only be attested in the context of prototypical revelation. In fact, everything Barth has to say about the relationship between the resurrection appearances and the empty tomb applies to the relationship between the Incarnation and the Virgin Birth. In other words, The Virgin Birth is not a "historical" concept, it is a *sui generis* theological concept, one that is necessary to the *sui generis* theological realm. It is an irreducible holistic concept. In other words, there is no Birth of Jesus Christ in the *sui generis*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 174.

¹⁵¹ Barth, *CD* IV/1, 207.

¹⁵² Barth, *CD* I/2, 182.

theological realm that is not a Virgin Birth. Conversely, the only factual Virgin Birth is outside the *sui generis* theological realm in the non-theological (historical) lexicon subsequently consigned to myth by modernity. Again, as for the empty tomb, that the context of the attestation of prototypical revelation implies a Virgin Birth is not to say that a factual Virgin Birth is a necessary condition of prototypical revelation.

Concluding Remarks.

Romans II is not essentially a post-modern theologian's work, nor does the *Church Dogmatics* bear the stamp of "neo-orthodoxy"; rather, in the strictest continuity, both seek to resolve Overbeck's metatheological dilemma with the most ferocious dialectical irony. The ambition of the *Dogmatics* to do this on a grand scale, encompassing *all* the elements of the Christian story, means carrying on where the earlier work left off, taking it, as it were, to its logical conclusion.

Chapter Four

I. The Metatheological Dilemma and the Existence of God.

In Barth's theology the *sui generis* theological realm is bound by prototypical revelation in the sense that no less but no more than prototypical revelation logically justifies, indeed necessitates, commitment to the classical doctrines of the Christian faith - the Incarnation, the empty tomb, the Virgin Birth.

Hence insofar as the classical epistemological question - how do we know it exists? - descends upon this realm, it descends not on these loci (either individually or collectively) but upon prototypical revelation. If the authenticity of the latter can be established in some way or another, all else unfolds to reveal the great Christian panoramic. Conversely, to fail to uphold this starting-point is instantaneously to collapse all ostensibly theological talk to the realm of the non-theological. (Barth's argument is never that the mere existence of talk about the incarnation, the empty tomb, etc., is testimony to the truth of prototypical revelation.)

For all that the great philosophers have written at length on the existence of God, Barth is adamant that it is the somewhat more modest writings of the evangelical witnesses rather than, e.g., the great writings of Plato,¹ where proof of God's existence is to be found. In other words, the Bible is *inter alia* the *sui generis* theological equivalent of the writings of the great philosophers on proof of the existence of God.² The Gospels as witness to prototypical revelation are *inter alia* the prototypical *sui generis* theological equivalent.

It is in accordance with the character of revelation in the Christian sense that its occurrence and therefore also the existence of God can only be published ... by reference to the verbal, literal, written tidings of [the] event of revelation. The news of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ stands in Holy Writ and therefore any reference to it, any announcement of the event of revelation, must follow the biblical text. To put it quite plainly: what we have come to know as revelation in the Christian sense is to be found in a book, in the book of the Old and New

¹ Barth, "The Christian Understanding of Revelation", 220.

² Hence Barth readily agreed with Kant that "the Biblical theologian proves that God exists by means of the fact that He has spoken in the Bible." Barth, *Protestant Theology*, 311.

Testaments. God and His existence are to be found in this book.³

In other words, for Barth *God* reveals Himself as *God* is *inter alia* proof of the existence of God. The resolution of the metatheological dilemma - *sui generis* theological truth - encompasses *inter alia* the solution to the question of the existence of God.

II. A Mismatch between the *Sui Generis* Rationality of Prototypical Revelation and General (Historical) Rationality: Barth's Ultimate Solution?

But what is this solution? There is a body of evidence in the *Church Dogmatics* that lends credibility to the view that the full extent of Barth's 'epistemological thesis' is that the *sui generis* rationality of prototypical revelation cannot be evaluated by a general concept or canon of rationality; that such a concept is simply inappropriate as an epistemological measure. In particular, there are no historical epistemological analogies commensurate to the *sui generis* rationality of prototypical revelation.⁴ The rationality of *Historie* is qualitatively different and serves only to distort the *sui generis* rationality of prototypical revelation if it attempts to assimilate it.

It is beyond question that the New Testament did not know how to conceal, and obviously did not wish to conceal the peculiar character [*Eigenart*] of this history, which burst through all general ideas of history as it takes place and as it may be said to take place within space and time. There is no proof [*Beweis*] and there obviously cannot and ought not to be any proof for the fact that this history did

³ Barth, "The Christian Understanding of Revelation", 216.

⁴ In order to avoid misunderstanding, it should be made clear from the outset of this chapter that this thesis will argue (in chapters 5, 6 and 7) that this is *not* the full extent of Barth's epistemological thesis. To be sure, it is true that there is a mismatch between the *sui generis* rationality of prototypical revelation and any other (general or species-specific) concept of rationality. But pointing this out is not how Barth disposes of these latter concepts. Barth does not present us with *self-authenticating sui generis* theological truth, if by this is meant "not answerable to some kind of universal rationality" (e.g., the traditional philosopher's rationality). Moreover, as will be seen in chapter 6, where this interpretation attributes only *partial commensurability* to Barth, Barth holds to *complete commensurability*. Again, where this interpretation attributes a kind of theological realism to Barth, chapter 7 shows it is inadequate to characterise Barth's theology as one in which *faith* is the species of knowledge appropriate to the apprehension of prototypical revelation (a theological realism where faith is the appropriate mode of knowledge). As will be seen, Torrance is one such theologian who takes the view that Barth holds to self-authenticating theological truth in the above sense i.e., *sui generis* truth not answerable to some kind of universal rationality.

take place (proof, that is, according to the terminology of modern historical scholarship [*heutiger historisch Wissenschaft*]).⁵

It is not merely that there is no proof, it is that there cannot and ought not to be any proof. Again note what Barth means by proof in the context of the resurrection appearances. He speaks of "external objective assurance":

Even *1 Cor.* cannot be claimed as an attempt at such a proof, and therefore as an attempt at an external objective assurance that the history did, in fact, take place. For the witnesses to whom Paul appeals with such solemnity are not the outside impartial witnesses which such an attempt would demand. They are the tradition which underlies the community which calls for a decision of faith. They are those who have themselves made this decision of faith, Cephas, the Twelve, five hundred brethren, James, then all the Apostles, then finally in the same breath, Paul himself. In these well-known verses there is an appeal to faith, not on the basis of Paul's knowledge, but in the recollection of the faith which constitutes the community.⁶

Again, this time from III/2:

Even *1 Cor* 14, 3-8 is treated in a strangely abstract way if it is regarded as a citation of witnesses for the purpose of historical proof.⁷

Barth draws our attention not to a mere matter of fact but to a matter of logical consequence:

No such proof is adduced or even intended in the New Testament. Therefore we ought not to try to deduce such a proof from it. If in modern scholarship historical ground means the outline of an event as it can be seen in its How independently of the standpoint of the onlooker, as it can be presented in this way, as it can be proved in itself and in its general and more specific context and in relation to the analogies of other events, as it can be established as having certainly taken place, then the New Testament itself does not enable us to state that we are on historical ground in relation to the event here recorded. There is no reason to deplore this. After all that we have seen of the nature and character and function of the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the basis, and in the context, of the New Testament message, it is inevitable that this should not be the place for the historicist concept of history.⁸

The sense of *Beweis* Barth rejects is *proof according to the terminology of modern historical scholarship*. In his debate with Bultmann in *CD* III/2 he has already clarified what he means by this. He cannot, he says there, engage Bultmann in exegetical discussion because he is

⁵ Barth, *CD* IV/1, 335.

⁶ *Ibid*, 335.

⁷ Barth, *CD* III/2, 452.

⁸ Barth, *CD* IV/1, 335.

a systematic theologian of the type which handles texts in such a way that their exegesis is always controlled by a set of dogmatic presuppositions and is thus wholly dependent upon their validity.⁹

The dogmatic presuppositions are those against which historical inquiry assesses its grounds for making any particular historical statement. Troeltsch's "Historical and Dogmatic Method in Theology" set out three principles which he thought governed all historical inquiry.¹⁰ The historical arena of the New Testament could not be exempted except on pain of *sacrificium intellectus*. These principles were respectively: the habituation on principle to historical criticism; analogy; and the mutual interrelation of all historical developments (correlation). To the extent that the grounds for making any historical statement pertaining to the New Testament failed to satisfy one of the three, the event in question could not be said to have happened. Bultmann's exegesis of the resurrection narratives follows the principles of the critical-historical school: it is guided by the principle of verification by the methods, and above all, the tacit assumption of modern historical scholarship.¹¹ But according to Barth, revelation - God reveals Himself as God (*inter alia* reveals Himself to exist) - must be accepted on its own terms, its own logic and rationality, or not at all.¹²

⁹ Barth *CD III/2*, 445.

¹⁰ E Troeltsch, "Historical and Dogmatic Method in Theology", *Religion in History*, translated by J Luther Adams and W F Bense, (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1991), 11-32.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 446.

¹² Troeltsch's principle of analogy is a particular example of Hume's concept of analogical reasoning - in the *Enquiry* the basis for all experimental reasoning. According to Hume, theology had a basis in experience insofar as it had a basis in analogical reasoning, that is, insofar as it had a basis in replicable experience (ideally approximating to constant conjunction). Yet it is clear that Hume did not think this was true of theology, which is why he concluded that theology's "best and most solid foundation is faith and *divine* revelation" (i.e., a miracle, which by definition contradicts extremely well established laws of constant conjunction). It may be thought that Barth took Hume's advice and founded his theology *outside* the domain of Hume's "fork" - outside the reach of analogical reasoning - on faith and revelation in the sense of miracle. But as we know from chapter 1, that is not what he did. To do so would have been to *avoid* rather than resolve Hume's metatheological dilemma. Barth puts *sui generis* theological truth in amongst, or rather alongside, Hume's truths. *Sui generis* theological truth is outside the scope of analogical reasoning but this does not entail it takes the form of a miracle. Insofar as the resurrection appearances are a miracle they are not a "nature-miracle" (Bultmann's terminology; see Barth, *CD III/2*, 451) though they are a unique "one-off" event. This would be to define them negatively in terms of the (suspension of the) laws of nature and not positively, in terms of *sui generis* theological truth. Thus it is the *sui generis*

III. T F Torrance: an Interpretation of Barth's Epistemology Applicable to Prototypical Revelation.

A recurring theme in Torrance's interpretation of Barth's epistemology is that knowledge of God - and therefore His existence itself - takes place within the limits of the nature of the object of inquiry. This means that faith is the mode of knowledge appropriate to knowledge of God.¹³

While Torrance's reading of Barth's epistemology may not be accurate either in every single detail or in emphasis,¹⁴ it cannot be doubted that with respect to the criterion of sophistication and therefore generality of methodological approach it is without serious competition.

(unique) *identity* of prototypical revelation that provides the rebuttal of the applicability of Troeltsch's principles and the resolution of the metatheological dilemma. That whatever happens, happens once (a *sui generis* event happening once not twice), is not of itself the basis for the rebuttal. What is sufficient is that saga and legend are determined by the event in question as the appropriate modes of description.

¹³ In #4 of this chapter it was asserted that it is not good enough to characterise Barth's theology as one in which *faith* is the species of knowledge appropriate to the apprehension of prototypical revelation (a theological realism where faith is the appropriate mode of knowledge). According to Torrance, for Barth: "In theological knowledge the reason lets itself be determined by the nature of God in his revelation, and adopts a mode of rationality that corresponds with God's objectifying of himself for man. That is epistemologically the meaning of faith - faith is not in the slightest degree any irrational leap, but a sober commitment to the nature of the given reality" Torrance, *Biblical*, 68. As will be seen in chapter 7 this is not a sufficiently exact specification of Barth's position on the epistemological meaning of faith. On Torrance's view Barth leaves us with no reason for accepting faith is a form of knowledge (other than taking it on trust - on faith! - or basing it on some kind of 'internal verification'). But Barth's position is that knowledge of God is *that which faith is*. Barth *CD* II/1, 14. And since knowledge of God is (prototypically) defined by the 'prototypical revelation-prototypical witnesses' relation, faith is no less and no more than being in that position. Moreover, since knowledge of God turns out to be analytic (though *a posteriori*), faith is not a species of epistemological realism. But these are all issues that must wait until chapter 7. It remains to be said that Torrance also holds to the 'Barth is a theologian of partial commensurability' thesis, which as was also asserted at #4, is shown to be invalid in chapter 6.

¹⁴ Hunsinger is of the opinion that Torrance's "objectivist" interpretation dominates, rather than is tempered by, "particularism". Hunsinger, *How To Read Karl Barth. The Shape of His Theology* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1991), 9-12. If Torrance is overimpressed by the analogy between Barth's theology and scientific investigation, it does not appear to have prevented him from making a number of statements that testify to his "particularistic" reading of Barth: theology is said by Barth to restrict its activities "to the limits of the nature of its concrete object" and to develop "a method in accordance with the nature of its object". Torrance, *Theological Science* (London, Oxford University Press, 1969), 179. Theology is said to be a form of "scientific activity" in which reason is "unconditionally bound to its object and determined by it. The mode of rational activity is strictly prescribed by the "nature of the object". *Ibid*, 192.

Torrance's interpretation has changed very little (in this he resembles Bultmann) - from his first major writing on Barth *Karl Barth: An Introduction to His Early Theology, 1910-1931* through the Barth-inspired interpretation of theology as science presented in *Theological Science*, to *Karl Barth: Biblical and Evangelical Theologian*. In all three books Torrance has been a most persuasive proponent of the view that Barth's theology posits an object of inquiry and description demanding an epistemology the nature of which is in accordance with the nature of the object of inquiry. All the following could easily have been culled from the one book.

Speaking of Barth's *Christliche Dogmatik im Entwurf*, Torrance wrote in *Karl Barth: an Introduction to his Early Theology 1910-1931*:

Such prolegomena ... is an attempt to inquire from within actual knowledge after its own general ground and presupposition Only in the actual course of such exposition and explanation would a proper, relevant and legitimate epistemology emerge. That is the essential way of science, and it is as a *science* in that proper sense, relevant to the nature of its own object, that dogmatics claims to be. Therefore it must never allow itself to be torn away from its object¹⁵

Again, speaking of theology comparing more favourably with science rather than philosophy, he writes:

It is questionable whether theology as he [Barth] pursues it can be compared favourably with philosophy. As it turns out does it not bear a closer comparison with an *exact science* such as physics which restricts its activities to the limits laid down by the nature of its concrete object, and develops a method in accordance with the nature of its object, bracketing it off from every world view (either as an *a priori* condition or an *a posteriori* product)¹⁶

Later:

... theological activity is a rational act answering to the nature and rationality of its object¹⁷

And finally:

... this function theology exercises in a strictly scientific way, that is, one in which from beginning to end it acts in conformity to its own proper object, develops a mode of rationality in accordance with its nature and derives appropriate critical criteria from the objective ground on which its knowledge actually arises. It is thus

¹⁵ Torrance, *Karl Barth: An Introduction to His Early Theology, 1910-1931* (London, SCM Press, 1962), 107-8.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 179-80.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 187.

a free independent science working out within the limits laid down by its object the same kind of scientific procedure which operates in every other pursuit of exact and positive knowledge, yet differing from them in accordance with scientific requirements, through the unique nature of its object, God in his Word.¹⁸

In *Theological Science* the epistemological thrust is the same. Although the subject of the book is not Barth directly, it is Barth-inspired. Like physics, theology is said to restrict its activities to the limits laid down by the nature of its concrete object and to develop a method in accordance with the nature of its object.¹⁹ Theology is said to be a form of scientific activity in which reason is unconditionally bound to its object and determined by it. The mode of rational activity is strictly prescribed by the nature of the object.²⁰

Finally, in *Karl Barth: Biblical and Evangelical Theologian* Torrance reaffirms a familiar theme:

All scientific activity is one in which the reason acts strictly and precisely in accordance with the nature of its object, and so lets its the object prescribe for it both the limits within which it may be known and the mode of rationality that is to be adopted toward it²¹

Indeed, Cartesian and Kantian modes of pre-understanding notwithstanding,

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 204.

¹⁹ Torrance, *Theological Science*, 179.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 192.

²¹ Torrance, *Biblical*, 67-8. Thus Torrance develops the theme that Barth's seminal contribution to theology has been to break through the dualistic constraints of Cartesian and Kantian categories of pre-understanding to an understanding of God tempered by an acknowledgement of the unique nature of its object. Accordingly theology's failure to perceive what has happened has resulted in a corresponding failure to appreciate the revolutionary nature of Barth's impact on modern theology: "The main difficulty people have with Karl Barth arises as they try to understand him within the dualist frame of thought that has prevailed within our western culture since the age of the Enlightenment, whereas Barth's thought has prevailed far beyond that. [...] To understand Barth one must learn how to think with him in his profound integration of ontological and dynamic relations, for that is to think in ways appropriate to the unique acts of God's saving revelation in Jesus Christ, which cannot be appreciated properly in static terms, or with an obsolete notion of the autonomous reason as somehow a source of knowledge." *Ibid*, ix-x. In this respect we would do well to learn from scientists: "... where scientists have been adapting their thinking more rigorously to the subtle behaviour of the created nature of the universe as it has come from God and as it is being steadily disclosed through their investigations, many Christian people have been failing to adapt their thinking to the nature of the mighty living God disclosed through the incarnation in space and time They appear to be still trapped within patterns of thinking that owe more to static and logico-causal forms of thought deriving from classical, medieval and Enlightenment rationalism than from the Gospel of the risen Jesus Christ." *Ibid*, x.

epistemology itself develops out of encounter with the object of enquiry:

... epistemologies properly emerge, through *pari passu* or step by step conformity of our understanding with the nature of the object, toward the end of scientific enquiries rather than at the beginning, and cannot be detached to constitute some kind of pre-understanding or allowed the kind of priority from which it could dominate knowledge of the object.²²

IV. D Z Phillips and the '*Pari Passu*' (Internalist) Interpretation of the Later Wittgenstein's Epistemology.

Like Torrance's interpretation of Barth, D Z Phillips' interpretation of Wittgenstein's later philosophy reaches the conclusion that the logic, form and content of any epistemological procedure, criteria or grounds or evidence emerge *pari passu* in the activity of clarifying the grammar of discourse as it unfolds in our forms of life.²³ Since it appeared as if forms of life and their accompanying language-games could be separated off, one from the other, Wittgenstein was attributed the thesis that language-games were *autonomous*. Accordingly, each form of life and accompanying language-game was deemed to have a logic of its own and as such had its own criteria of truth, intelligibility, reality, and rationality. Consequently, in the realm of epistemology, each language-game and form of life has its own processes of proof, verification, ratification, rationality and logic.

The job of the later philosophy is to elucidate or understand these concepts as they occur in our forms of life but not to advocate (or prejudge) what one is to believe:

After it has sought to clarify the grammar of ... beliefs its job is over.²⁴

²² *Ibid*, 146.

²³ It is not claimed that Torrance's interpretation of Barth and D Z Phillips' interpretation of Wittgenstein do not in any formal respects differ at all. To be sure, it is likely that where Phillips agrees with Wittgenstein's assertion that "Grammar tells what kind of object anything is. (Theology as grammar.)" (Wittgenstein, *PI* § 373), Torrance would prefer the reverse: "The object tells us what kind of grammar is appropriate." Nevertheless, in respect of the formal property in question they agree. *Mutatis mutandis*, Phillips' view of Wittgenstein coincides with Torrance's view of Barth to the extent that Phillips' Wittgenstein believes that epistemological procedures etc., emerge *pari passu* out of our forms of life.

²⁴ D Z Phillips, *Faith and Philosophical Enquiry* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), 109. A Keightley provides a lucid account of Wittgenstein on religious belief. A Keightley, *Wittgenstein, Grammar and God* (London, Epworth Press, 1976), 47-55. Keightley's own definition

In other words, the job of philosophy is to delineate and demarcate the logic and grammar of language-games and forms of life and avoid imposing, *a priori*, alien logics and rationalities of other language-games.

It followed that no Archimedean point existed from which a philosopher could relevantly criticise whole modes of discourse, or, what came to the same thing, ways of life. Applying a context-free non-relativistic concept of truth and intelligibility without regard to the differences among language-games overlooked the possibility that there were as many criteria as there were language-games and forms of life. In effect, traditional philosophy had failed to take into account the potential existence of diverse criteria of truth, intelligibility, etc., mistakenly believing in one supreme overarching conception of truth and intelligibility from which to evaluate and criticise its truth-claims.

Although as a rule of thumb one would not go far wrong if one assigned *a priori*, as it were, philosophers to an external perspective of reason and theologians to an internal perspective of faith,²⁵ there are significant exceptions to this rule. It has been argued that Wittgenstein is one of them and that his response commits him to the plane of the internal perspective. Phillips is perhaps the most well known proponent of this view. He defines *internalism* as the view that whatever is called

of what Wittgenstein meant by "grammar" is instructive: "Wittgenstein's use of "grammar" is inextricably bound up with our ways of reasoning, judging etc. It applies to the way we speak about a word, an object and also the fundamental features of human life. When Wittgenstein says that 'grammar tells us what kind of object anything is', he is not concerned to relate the physical features of an object. The grammar of 'chair' establishes the *concept* of chair in our whole system of concepts. It distinguishes the *way* one sits in a chair from, say, sitting on a cigarette. A chair can be broken but not in the way that clocks, homes or promises are broken." *Ibid*, 42-43.

²⁵ The concepts *internal perspective of faith* and *external perspective of reason* are to be found in Dalferth, *Theology*, 56. Dalferth defines a *perspective* in terms borrowed from Russell: "it is the view of the world from a given place." *Ibid*, 50. Accordingly, those who view the world from the former perspective take the internal perspective of the participants and those who view from the latter perspective take the external perspective of the observers. *Ibid*, 50-59. Dalferth applies the internal perspective-external perspective model specifically to Barth's theology. *Ibid*, 123-126. But in applying the concept "internal perspective" to Barth one must beware of construing the term "internal" as implying "private to the participant". To the extent that the internal perspective of faith coincides with the frontier of the theological realm, it has a thoroughly public locus, accessible to those who hold to the external perspective (see chapter 7, section I) and the practitioners of other disciplines (see chapter 1, section VII). In that sense, "internal perspective" as applicable to Barth has no solipsistic-mentalistic connotation.

religious is self-authenticating; and *externalism* as the view that religious belief is answerable to universal criteria of intelligibility.²⁶ "Self-authenticating" as opposed to "externally authenticated", applied across all first-order discourse, language-games and forms of life, excludes the appropriateness of a court of rational justification presided over by universally applicable rational canon.

Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic paradigm is one application of Wittgenstein's dictum of theology as grammar. Hence it is no surprise Wittgenstein's work has been a major stimulus to Lindbeck's thinking out of the cultural-linguistic approach.²⁷ The intratextual construal of a religious text (as part of that holistic cultural-linguistic system we know as religion) comprises of a vocabulary of discursive and non-discursive symbols together with a distinctive logic or grammar in terms of which this vocabulary can be meaningfully deployed.²⁸ In other words, given the retranslation of Barth's understanding of the Gospel story into the Lindbeckian idiom, the text can be construed as a language-game and theology can be deployed in the second-order activity of clarification of the conceptual contents of this language-game.²⁹ Hence, as in Phillips' Wittgenstein, both ontological truth-claims and epistemological procedures are intratextual in the sense that they emerge from the language-game. Rationality then becomes an internal matter too and is

²⁶ Phillips, *Belief, Change and Forms of Life* (London, MacMillan, 1986), xii.

²⁷ G Lindbeck argues that Barth's theology is a type of cultural-linguistic theology, as opposed to experiential-expressivist or cognitive-propositional theology. It is one such consistent development and translation of Barth's theology into an epistemological conceptuality. See G Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine. Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (London, SPCK, 1984), 24.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 33. Lindbeck calls this "faithfulness as intratextuality". According to Lindbeck intratextuality entails that "meaning is constituted by the uses of a specific language rather than being distinguishable from it. Thus the proper way to determine what 'God' signifies, for example, is by examining how the word operates within a religion and thereby shapes reality and experience, rather than first establishing its propositional or experiential meaning and reinterpreting or reformulating its uses accordingly." *Ibid*, 114.

²⁹ *Ibid* 33. Within a cultural-linguistic framework, the text that is the Gospel story operates as a first-order discourse while dogmatic theology operates in a second-order mode, as a second-order discourse, statements of which are entirely controlled and subordinated to, the former discourse. The relation of the two is as a language to its grammar. On the one hand there is the language, the first-order discourse, and on the other there is the grammar or syntax specifying how language actually works. *Ibid*, 79-84. Accordingly, the objective of dogmatic theology would be to ground the text foundationally in an enterprise of redescription and clarification of the text in question.

determined by the internal perspective of faith. Paul Holmer, a Yale colleague of Lindbeck's, whom Lindbeck cites as a major influence in shaping his understanding of Wittgenstein,³⁰ has assimilated Wittgenstein and Barth in this respect:

The fact that Wittgenstein and other analytic logicians have made strong remarks about forms of life having an ultimacy, has also created the notion that theology is like metaphysics in not being any longer the final court of justification. If forms of life are foundational then it looks as though fideism is more crucial than theology. So it is that followers of Wittgenstein and Wittgenstein himself are assumed to be of the mind that denies there is a recognisable kind of knowledge of God and that theology is not truly cognitive, objective and rational. Oddly enough, Barthians, Kierkegaardians, and Wittgensteinians together look like the opponents of cognitivism and rationality in religion, but only if a certain pattern of rationality is taken to be normative.³¹

Epistemology must adhere to one and only one pattern of rationality, otherwise fideism is the inevitable consequence. Against this Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* and Barth's *Church Dogmatics* presuppose that at a minimum there is at least more than one paradigm of rationality. It is for such a reason that Phillips believes both thinkers ought to be rescued from the unjustified reproach that they are irrationalists or subjectivists.³²

Nevertheless a cluster of concepts with decidedly pejorative connotations have attached themselves to Barth and Wittgenstein in the epistemological arena. They are: subjectivism, internalism and fideism.³³

³⁰ *Ibid*, 28.

³¹ P Holmer, *The Grammar of Faith* (San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1978), 184. Evans takes the view that for Barth "dogmatic theology is similar to what Wittgenstein calls 'logical grammar'; it exhibits the conceptual structure of biblical language. One does not attempt to justify or defend biblical language; one merely displays its inner logical connections." D Evans, *The Logic of self-Involvement: a Philosophical Study of Everyday Language* (London, SCM Press, 1963), 23.

³² Phillips, *Faith After Foundationalism* (London, Routledge, 1988), 226. For a critical comparison of Phillips' Wittgenstein and Barth see C K Grant, "From World to God", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Symposium, Suppl. XLI 1967, 153-62, esp. 154-157. Comparing Wittgenstein-influenced analytic philosophy and Barth's theology, A R Glenn writes: "Therefore when Karl Barth writes that theology has its own proper verification corresponding to its own particular objectivity, he is reflecting epistemological conclusions of contemporary analytic philosophy." Quoted in Sherry, *Religion, Truth and Language-games* (London, MacMillan, 1977), 173.

³³ Fideism has been defined as "the view, recurrent throughout religious history, that essential religious doctrines cannot be established by rational means, but only accepted, if at all, by acts of faith. Its extreme form (for example in Kierkegaard) holds that religion requires the acceptance of doctrines actually absurd or contrary to reason." Entry under "Fideism", Flew (ed), *A Dictionary of*

V. Nevertheless, Barth is a Fideist?

In his paper "Critical Reflections on Karl Barth",³⁴ Brand Blandshard distinguishes between two types of thinkers on the question of the existence of God. On the one hand there are "the succession of rationalist philosophers from Plato to Whitehead".³⁵ He places himself into this category. On the other hand there are the fideists - Tertullian, Luther, Pascal, and Kierkegaard. Into this category he places Karl Barth.³⁶ Blandshard is not alone in this evaluation of Barth. Brian Hebblethwaite in the *Ocean of Truth: A Defence of Objective Theism* writes:

When one thinks of Tertullian, Luther, Kierkegaard, or Karl Barth, one is struck how easily theological hostility to metaphysics and philosophy back-fires. The religious rationalist belies such attempts to detach faith from speculation and though the move away from the abstract God of the philosophers to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is quite understandable, it only plays straight into the hands of the subjectivists critics of realist theology.³⁷

A little later on Hebblethwaite adds:

What one needs is the theologically realist philosophy of religion such as that of Alvin Plantinga or Richard Swinburne.³⁸

Notwithstanding any fallacious inference that anti-subjectivism entails philosophical or theological realism, the inference that Barth's theology collapses into subjectivism ironically puts Hebblethwaite - at least with respect to Barth - on the side of one of his foremost theological enemies, Don Cupitt:

But the fact is that Barth's way of talking about God is intelligible only internally

Philosophy (London, Pan Books, 1979). This definition implies a spectrum of fideisms, some more 'fideistic' than others. One can have insufficient reason, no reason or reason to the contrary for believing in specific religious or theological doctrines. See A Hannay, *Kierkegaard* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), 99.

³⁴ B Blandshard, "Critical Reflections on Karl Barth", in Hick, (ed), *Faith and the Philosophers* (London, MacMillan, 1964), 159-200.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 196.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 197.

³⁷ B Hebblethwaite, *The Ocean of Truth: A Defence of Objective Theism* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988), 38-9.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 40. Note the realism Hebblethwaite cites is the traditional apologetic rational realism of Plantinga and Swinburne, not the Dogmatic (not dogmatic) realism of Torrance.

and on Barth's own terms.³⁹

Cupitt here takes Hebblethwaite on Barth to its logical conclusion: a theology collapsing to subjectivism is fated to be intelligible *internally* only, which is to say, such a theology eschews any (deferential) reference to the *external perspective* traditional philosophy would consider essential.

It is no exaggeration to say that the categories *internal perspective* and *external perspective* play a fundamental explanatory role in the history of philosophy and theology on the question of the existence of God. For this history has very often been a battle ground between two diametrically opposed camps of thought, one taking up position on the plane of the external perspective and the other taking up position on the plane of an internal perspective. We may argue over who is on which plane - Aquinas on the first? Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Kierkegaard, Bultmann on the second? - but that the planes exist is not doubted.⁴⁰

Philosophers and theologians whose response to the plane of the external perspective has been to posit a plane of the internal perspective have done this either by taking a leap of faith from the plane of the external perspective to the plane of the internal perspective or (less radically) by positing a plane of the internal perspective whose logic (form) and content is uniquely its own. Both sub-categories of response have been designated (for different reasons) as species of fideism, a fideist being someone who eschews any (deferential) reference at all to the external perspective traditional philosophy considers essential.

VI. Wittgenstein too is Guilty of the Charge of Fideism?

When Kai Nielsen coined the phrase "Wittgensteinian fideist"⁴¹ his intention could not have been to align Wittgenstein completely to Kierkegaard's way of

³⁹ D Cupitt, *The Sea of Faith*, 246.

⁴⁰ Dalferth lists five historical variations on the theme of the relationship between faith and reason: faith and nature (natural reason); faith and reason (rational reason); faith and history (historical reason); faith and experience (experiential reason); faith and communication (communicative reason). Dalferth, *Theology*, 57.

⁴¹ K Nielsen, "Wittgensteinian Fideism" *Philosophy* XLII 161 (1967), 191-209.

thinking. For Nielsen clearly distinguishes Wittgenstein from someone who has taken a leap of faith from the plane of the external perspective, or as in the definition, makes an act of faith in defiance, as it were, of the external perspective and reason itself.⁴² The Wittgenstein Nielsen gives us (and in this he agrees with Phillips) is someone who has never been on the plane of the external perspective; accordingly, he cannot follow Kierkegaard and his leap.⁴³ Nielsen's Wittgenstein is always firmly situated on the plane of the internal perspective. The eight conditions of Wittgensteinian fideism confirm this conclusion:

1. The forms of language are the forms of life.
2. What is given is the forms of life
3. Ordinary language is all right as it is.
4. A philosopher's task is not to evaluate or criticise language games, but to describe them where necessary and to the extent necessary to break philosophical perplexity concerning their operation.
- 5 The different modes of discourse which are distinctive forms of life all have a logic of their own.
6. Forms of life taken as a whole are not amenable to criticism; each mode of discourse is in order as it is, for each has its own criteria, and each sets its own norms of intelligibility, reality and rationality.
7. These general dispute-engendering concepts, i.e. intelligibility, reality and rationality are systematically ambiguous; their exact meaning can only be

⁴² For a lucid account of what a leap of faith means for Kierkegaard, see Hannay *Kierkegaard*, chapter IV, "The Dialectic of Faith", 90-156.

⁴³ Nevertheless, there is one significant similarity between Nielsen's Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard that provides a rationale for his ascription of fideism. Nielsen's Wittgenstein does not work back from the external perspective. Neither does Kierkegaard. Hannay puts it of Kierkegaard in the following succinct way:

"Kierkegaard says that whereas the aesthetic works describe the way 'back' from the aesthetic, the dialectic works describe the way 'back from the System, speculation, etc.' [...] We have seen how in the aesthetic works Kierkegaard does indeed begin with the aesthetic. With the 'System', however, Kierkegaard seems to see no such natural progression. So the dialectical production does not begin 'with' the systematic and speculative, but 'against' it. Speculative philosophy is a blind alley for the human spirit, an object of misplaced seriousness, and irony and humour are weapons to be used against it from the very start." Hannay, *Kierkegaard*, 91.

determined in the context of a determinate way of life.

8. There is no Archimedean point in terms of which a philosopher (or for that matter anyone else) can relevantly criticise whole modes of discourse or, what comes to the same thing, ways of life, for each mode of discourse has its own specific criteria of reality/unreality.⁴⁴

One may summarise the conclusion Nielsen draws as follows: that while such a fideism does not wilfully contradict the external perspective traditional philosophy considers essential, it does posit an internal view-point whose logic and rationality is distinct from and discontinuous with, the logic and rationality of the aforementioned external perspective. All philosophy can do is non-critically elucidate the grammar of each discourse or form of life. As such it is insulated from rational philosophical criticism (4,6 and 8) much as faith is considered in some theological and philosophical circles safe from reason. As Ernst Gellner famously put it:

By destroying philosophy, Wittgenstein made room for faith ... religious believers can find in Wittgensteinianism not merely a device for ruling out philosophic criticism, they can find in it a positive validation of their belief.⁴⁵

A J Ayer implicitly commits himself to the same position. Speaking of religion he writes:

I would not be content to hold that I was playing a game [making religious utterances] in accordance with a set of rules. Rather, I should wish for some assurance that my beliefs were true.⁴⁶

And Grayling offers a similar interpretation of Wittgenstein's philosophy of religion:

Wittgenstein enables theologians to defend against criticism on the grounds that there are no independent means for substantiating religious truth-claims.⁴⁷

What Nielsen, Gellner, Ayer and Grayling object to is Wittgenstein's abandonment of philosophy's historic obligation (following the Enlightenment) to engage in *rational criticism*, especially criticism of received opinions such as those

⁴⁴ Nielsen, "Fideism", 192-193.

⁴⁵ E Gellner, "Reply to Mr. McIntyre", *Universities and Left Review*, 1958, *.

⁴⁶ Ayer, *Wittgenstein* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1985), 92.

⁴⁷ A C Grayling, *Wittgenstein* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1988), 103-4.

embodied in religion. (Rational justification must mean rational criticism, otherwise we would not progress beyond the canon of belief assembled by Church authority.) How, they ask, can Wittgenstein *qua* philosopher this side of the Enlightenment posit an internal perspective immune from criticism?

VII. Bartley's "Critical Rationalist" Critique of Barth and Wittgenstein.

Nowhere has the thesis - Wittgenstein's exclusion of rational criticism of his internal perspective implies fideism - been more cogently and expansively stated than in the work of William Bartley who, like Ernst Gellner, came under the philosophical stewardship of Karl Popper at the London School of Economics. As befits a more than fledgling Popperian philosopher, the central themes of Bartley's body of work continue (though not uncritically) the tradition originating in Popper's own work known as critical rationalism.⁴⁸ The *leitmotif* of Critical Rationalism is no less than rational criticism in action. Indeed Bartley as an ultra-Popperian restricts the term "rationalism" to refer to the tradition whose members are dedicated to the task of trying to learn more about the world through the practice of critical argument.⁴⁹

In his essay "A Popperian Harvest", in the section entitled 'The intellectual position of his opponents: the Wittgensteinian problematic', Bartley explains why Wittgenstein is not part of this tradition.⁵⁰ Contrasting Popper with Wittgenstein, Bartley asserts that where Popper's philosophy is problem-orientated Wittgenstein's philosophy is discourse-orientated.⁵¹ The two categories are obviously to be taken as mutually exclusive. Hence Bartley claims that it is not easy to identify any

⁴⁸ See K Popper, *Postscript to the Logic of Scientific Discovery*, vol 1, edited by W Bartley III, (London, Hutchinson, 1983), 18-34.

⁴⁹ Bartley, *Retreat from Commitment*, 2nd edition, (la Salle, Illinois, Open Court Publications, 1984), xxvi.

⁵⁰ Bartley, "A Popperian Harvest" in P Levinson (ed), *In Pursuit of Truth: Essays on the Philosophy of Karl Popper on the Occasion of his 80th Birthday* (New York, Humanities Press, 1982), 249-290.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 275-289.

philosophical problem that Wittgenstein can be said to have solved, or any philosophical theory that he propounded.⁵² Instead his work inspired a research programme which did away with criticism. Since any general philosophical theory of criticism was impossible then

to criticise, to evaluate, to explain, these are no longer genuine philosophical aims: what remains for the philosopher is to describe the logics or grammars of various kinds of discourse and activity, the many different sorts of language-games and the forms of life in which they are embedded.⁵³

Bartley goes on to say that though Wittgenstein never claimed that all identifiable disciplines and activities in which people engage are language-games each with its own sets of rules, many of his followers did just this. They supposed that:

each individual activity - law, history, science, logic, ethics, politics, religion - had its own special grammar and logic; that mixing the grammar of one of these with that of another leads to philosophical error; and that the new job of the philosopher - his new research program under the Wittgensteinian dispensation - was to describe in detail these separate logics or grammars. In this spirit two generations of British and American professional philosophers came to write books with titles such as *The Vocabulary of Politics*, *The Language of Morals*, *The Logic of Moral Discourse*, *The Logic of Historical Explanation*, *The Language of (Literary) Criticism*, *The Language of Fiction*, *The Uses of Argument*, *The Logic of the Social Sciences*, *The Logic of the Sciences*, *The Province of Logic*, *The Language of Education*, *The Logic of Religious Language*, *Faith and Logic*, *Christian Discourse*, *The Language of Christian Belief*, *The Logic of Colour Words* and so on *ad nauseam*.⁵⁴

Still, according to Bartley Wittgenstein clearly satisfies the definition of a fideist since he insists that one language-game or grammar may not judge another.⁵⁵

It is clear that Bartley considers Barth to be guilty of the same fideistic manoeuvres. In the second edition of *The Retreat to Commitment* he describes himself as having confronted in the first edition

the contention - as ancient as Sextus Empiricus and the Greek skeptics, as contemporary as Wittgenstein, Ayer, Rorty, Karl Barth - that there is an essential logical limitation to rationality: that rational defence and examination of ideas must, for logical reasons, be terminated by an arbitrary appeal to what may be called dogmas or absolute presuppositions. These dogmas or presuppositions earned their names from their characteristics, which included the following: (1) such dogmas

⁵² *Ibid*, 276.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 279.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 279-80.

⁵⁵ Bartley, *Wittgenstein*, 123; see also Bartley, "A Popperian Harvest", 278-9.

and presuppositions, chosen arbitrarily and irrationally, or forced on one by the circumstances of fate or history, marked the limits of rationality; (2) they were not subject to review or criticism; (3) they were incapable of justification (4) all of one's positions that were rational were justified or defended in terms of these presuppositions or dogmas: that is, any rationality in one's life was rationality relative to irrational bases. All of one's rational positions could be derived or induced from, or were somehow warranted by, such dogmas and presuppositions.⁵⁶

Moreover, after having set down the essentials of the Wittgensteinian problematic in "A Popperian Harvest" Bartley goes on to note that this whole line of thinking (that embodied in Wittgenstein's later philosophy) has been reinforced by positive reactions on the part of other disciplines.⁵⁷ He then singles out Barth's theology in this respect:

With the great theologian Karl Barth ... one finds the rejection of apologetic theology and the substitution for it of kerygmatic theology, wherein the job of the theologian becomes simply to describe the basic - and ultimate - presuppositions of Christianity. Consequently it comes as no surprise that philosophy of religion and philosophical theology have been given a new lease of life by the Wittgensteinian problematic.⁵⁸

In other words, Barth like Wittgenstein is discourse-orientated rather than problem-orientated, insulating his realm from any such critical argument that would render the whole questionable. But for Bartley such a manoeuvre is sufficient to make Barth a fideist; since those who eschew the use of argument are fideists.

Bartley's interest in Barth can be traced back to the first edition of his *Retreat to Commitment*.⁵⁹ His critique of Barth proceeds within the context of a more general overarching scheme of argument which can be summarised as follows: any position, and any scientific procedure rests on a set of premises or a set of basic postulates or axioms which have to be assumed without proof. Given this, there is no fundamental methodological difference between a theologian and a mathematician or a physicist: all three start from basic axioms which cannot themselves be proved.

According to Bartley, Barth is one such theologian who defends his realm (his discourse) by means of this argument, what Bartley calls the *tu quoque* ('you

⁵⁶ Bartley *Retreat*, 2nd edition, 221.

⁵⁷ Bartley, "A Popperian Harvest", 280.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 280.

⁵⁹ Bartley, *Retreat from Commitment*, 1st edition, (London, Chatto and Windus, 1962).

also') argument.⁶⁰ As Bartley puts it, theology's retreat or recourse to the *tu quoque* argument effectively supplies it with "a rational excuse for an irrational commitment."⁶¹

In the later *Morality and Religion*⁶² Barth remains the theologian who is committed to the word of God. Accordingly, argument on behalf of rational apologetic theology is forbidden on the grounds that it is both useless and irreverent. The task of the theologian is restricted to:

(1) description or exposition of the Word of God and (2) criticism and testing of his own and other descriptions, past and current. Thus argument, creative discussion and disagreement, about the content of the Word of God is required, even to be expected. Argument about the truth of the Word of God is however forbidden.⁶³

Internally and intratextually there is disagreement with, even criticism of, any number of deductions. But criticism of taking up the stand-point of the interface of the theological realm in the first place is at all times forbidden. For Bartley, Barth is the theologian who posits an internal perspective in textual obedience to the Word of God. Hence, Barth cannot avoid the charge of fideism. Bartley goes on:

Yet, to exclude argument about the truth of the Word of God is to adopt a minimal but nonetheless absolute concession to irrationalism: one that was indeed to form the basis for neo-orthodoxy.⁶⁴

And Bartley concludes:

However rational and consistent Barth may have been, it remains true that he was at heart an irrationalist: he was committed dogmatically to the assumption that revelation occurred, that the Word of God had been given to man through Jesus, that the Bible was a testimony and report of this Word of God.⁶⁵

In the 2nd edition of *The Retreat to Commitment*, Bartley saw no reason to

⁶⁰ Indeed, Barth (and Kierkegaard and Tillich) are used to make the historical point that theology has embarked on a theological "retreat to commitment", retreating from genuine rational enquiry in the face of successive defeats, suffered mainly at the hands of the critical-historical method. *Ibid*, 13-87.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 89-90.

⁶² Bartley, *Morality and Religion* (London, Macmillan, 1971).

⁶³ *Ibid*, 43.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 44.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 46.

revise his view of the Swiss theologian:

... it is not the familiar irrationally committed neo-Calvinist dogmatist that I wish to emphasise. I wish to recall a side of Barth that is almost never mentioned. In fact, he was one of the most brilliant strategists of theological survival in the Christian Church. Far from being dogmatic in the ordinary sense of that word, he was remarkably flexible, a most rational irrationalist.⁶⁶

Barth's brilliant strategy is and remains the *tu quoque* argument. Moreover, it is within the freedom of space won by that argument that Barth finds the room to stake out a point of departure. This is:

Beginning with the assumption or commitment that revelation happened in Jesus, Barth resolves to take the assumption seriously in order to trace its implications.⁶⁷

Most of the implications are familiar. For example:

Traditional apologetic theology - i.e., argument on behalf of the Word of God - must be rejected as both useless and irreverent. It is useless because if the Word of God had really been accepted as such it is superfluous to offer reasons for so doing.⁶⁸

Hence as in the first edition, argument and criticism about the word of God are excluded. Bartley sums up Barth's position in the following manner:

... Barth gave an answer to the question of what are the boundaries of change and belief and of criticism within Christianity. His answer is that a Christian may abandon any statement about the content of the Christian message - on the ground that it is an inadequate statement of what the message really is - but he may not as a Christian abandon the Christian identity, the essence of Being a Christian, which is submission to the authority of the Word of God Christians, for Barth are those people who interpret the Word of God and do not ask whether it is true.⁶⁹

Does Barth defend prototypical revelation on the grounds of the *tu quoque* argument? Does he exclude argument about the truth of the Word of God on this basis? The answer is surely No. Prototypical revelation may or may not be describable by a fundamental proposition analogous to a primitive axiom in a logical system but Barth's epistemological thesis as it has thus far been stated is rather that the rationality of prototypical revelation is *sui generis* and therefore not an appropriate object of, for example, historical criticism.

⁶⁶ Bartley, *Retreat*, 2nd edition, 43.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 44.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 44.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 46-7.

Yet the cogency of Bartley's critique of Barth and his subsequent charge of fideism does not finally turn on this proposition. For Bartley's whole project is to show that the *tu quoque* argument is not a sufficient condition of avoiding the charge of fideism. In other words, that Barth is charged with fideism follows from the fact that the theological realm is immune from criticism at the locus of prototypical revelation, and therefore, by implication, at every other part. Barth forbids criticism of the very fact of taking up the stand-point at the interface of the theological realm.

VIII. Pannenberg's "Critical Rationalist" Critique of Barth.

Wolfhart Pannenberg's critique of Barth in *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*⁷⁰ in a section entitled "Karl Barth and the Positivity of Revelation" coincides with that of Nielsen, Gellner, Ayer, Grayling and Bartley in that it too reaches the conclusion that because Barth's *sui generis* theological realm is immune from criticism, it is a species of fideism. In other words, prototypical revelation, the frontier between the human sphere and the theological, is immune from external rational criticism. A philosopher (or for that matter anyone else) on the plane of the external perspective is denied recourse to rational criticism. Instead

... in turning to the theology of revelation Barth does not deny that he presupposes revelation. A characteristic feature of his theology is that revelation cannot be 'justified'. In this theology as a science of God and his revelation Barth takes God and his word as the only possible *starting-point*. This is the only position God can hold in relation to the human enquirer.⁷¹

In the words of Bartley, the theologian has to be committed from the outset, committed in this case to prototypical revelation: it has happened.

According to Pannenberg, Barth's basic idea is that scientific status rests first and foremost on appropriateness to the subject; it rests on research method only in a secondary manner.⁷² Hence it comes as no surprise that toward the end of the

⁷⁰ W Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, translated by F McDonagh, (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1976), 265-76.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 265-6.

⁷² *Ibid*, 269.

same paragraph, Pannenberg represents Barth's position in the language of Torrance, referring to Barth's argument for the scientific status of theology on the grounds of appropriateness to its object.⁷³

The question for Pannenberg is the same question asked by the other 'Popperian' rationalists,⁷⁴ namely whether such an argument is a sufficient condition of rationality.⁷⁵ Pannenberg pursues this question in an analysis of Barth's debate with Heinrich Scholz. He reaches the conclusion that Barth's rejection of Scholz's formal postulates or minimum conditions of what constitute fundamental criteria of scientific status cannot but set him amongst the fideists. Crucial in this respect is Barth's rejection of the Postulate of Control alias the Principle of Criticism. The Postulate of Control

concerns the requirement that the claim to truth made by theological statements should be subject to testing. However, this requirement is more general than the requirement of verification, which Scholz holds to be impossible in theology. His requirement is concerned only with intelligibility of formulation, with a declaration of the critical principle used, for example the 'evangelical' in evangelical dogmatics, so that 'the critical reader can form his own judgement on the propositions which are stated to be evangelical'. If the truth of theological assertions is not subject to control, then for Scholz theology fails as a science. All that remains is 'a personal confession of faith in the most decided sense of the word exempt from all earthly questioning'.⁷⁶

For Scholz a theological realm immune to criticism collapses to an entirely subjectivist internal perspective of faith, in a word, fideism. For Pannenberg the consequence of this is as follows:

The radical nature of Barth's position brings out very clearly a truth of more

⁷³ *Ibid*, 269-70. Not only did Pannenberg mean to criticise Barth's own defence of his theology as a science, he also criticised Torrance's "scientific-rational" interpretation. In this latter respect Pannenberg is especially critical of the sufficiency of Torrance's employment of the "criterion of appropriateness" in *Theological Science*. He notes that Torrance's assertion that this criterion requires scientific statements to be based on the "given"; that the "given fact with which theology operates is God uttering His Word and uttering Himself in His Word"; that the "scientific theology" which bases itself on this datum is "positive theology". *Ibid*, 270.

⁷⁴ Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science* "The Application of Critical Rationalism to Criticism of Theology", 43-50. As would be expected of a 'Popperian' rationalist, Pannenberg is especially appreciative of, and endorses, Bartley's *Retreat from Commitment* (1st ed.). *Ibid*, 44-7.

⁷⁵ This question, whether theology is rational is the real motive behind Barth's assertion that theology is a science. See Barth *CD* I/1, 7-11.

⁷⁶ Pannenberg, *Science*, 271.

general relevance. The Enlightenment questioned anything on authority which was not subject to proof by reason and experience. If we accept this as a valid stance, a 'positive' theology of revelation which does not depend on rational argument can rely only on a subjective act of will or an irrational venture of faith. For Barth's word of God - the church's preaching? scripture? Jesus himself? - demanding the obedience of faith cannot be unambiguous because it remains at least problematical whether it *is* God and divine revelation and not merely human convictions. If proof through rational enquiry is ruled out in advance, but for some reason or other we still want to hold the Christian tradition, nothing remains but the whole uninsured venture of faith.⁷⁷

In other words, in opposition to Torrance, Pannenberg takes the view that Barth's theology must be classified as a species of fideism: appropriateness to its object is not a sufficient condition of rationality since rationality must allow for, indeed, entail (rational) criticism from the external perspective of Reason.

IX. Bartley and Pannenberg are right: Torrance's Barth is a Fideist.

Have we drawn to a close on an impasse, two entrenched positions on whether Barth's theology is a species of fideism or an example of rationality? On the one side of the debate stand theologians like Torrance categorically rejecting the charge that Barth is a fideist and characterising his epistemological position as one of the highest rationality. On the other side stand theologians like Pannenberg and philosophers like Bartley who, as critical rationalists or even card-carrying Popperians of one sort or another, ultimately condemn Barth's 'epistemology' on the grounds that it refuses to admit any sort of criticism operating from the external perspective of Reason.

Yet the challenge represented by Bartley and Pannenberg reduces to a thinly disguised assault on the specifically Barthian thesis of the *sui generis* autonomy of theology. For, no matter what Torrance says, if it is not rational in some way or another on ordinary terms, but instead occupies some elevated rational sphere too rarefied for we ordinary mortals to approach and appropriate in any other terms but through an act of faith, then though 'God is *God*' may safeguard the autonomy of theology, the cost of insulating faith from criticism is a fideistic autonomy cut

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 273.

asunder from the theological identity of the problem of the existence of God. Thus Bartley and Pannenberg are correct to say that on this interpretation, Barth's Dogmatic theology cannot but abnegate its responsibility in this region, leaving no alternative - if we are rational and this side of the Enlightenment - to recasting theology as a function of, e.g., philosophy (philosophical theology) or anthropology (anthropological theology). Let us, they say, assume that Barth is right to assert that *sui generis* theological truth has a different logic from *Historie*. It follows that *Historie* cannot determine - criticise - whether *sui generis* theological truth exists. But it does not then follow that a (non-*historischen*) philosophical realism (realism in the broadest sense of the term, as defined in the following chapter) cannot determine whether it exists. But Barth also excludes (realist) criticism on this issue. "Yes", Bartley and Pannenberg assert, "Barth allows argument and criticism over the content of the Word of God. To be sure, description or exposition of the Word of God and subsequent criticism and testing of this description and exposition are valid theological exercises. Hence, Barth as Reformed theologian can engage in genuine theological argument on substantive doctrine, e.g., with his Lutheran counterparts over the validity of the *genus majesticum*. But, as Barth acknowledges, for this argument to take place at all is to presuppose the existence of common ground, the common ground of the stand-point of prototypical revelation. And it is precisely this stand-point that cannot be criticised. According to Barth, argument about the truth of the Word of God is forbidden; revelation is immune to criticism from reason. In other words, Barth disallows criticism at the epistemological point of access to his whole theology. Hence he is a fideist."

Concluding Remarks.

It is the aim of the next three chapters to show that the real Karl Barth is neither one who makes recourse to (fideistic) self-authenticating *sui generis* theological truth nor one who excludes rational criticism. The grounds on which Bartley and Pannenberg make their charge of fideism are refuted. In other words, Barth's theology is answerable (in some sense) to some embodiment of universal reason - but in a way that avoids the recasting of theology as non-theology.

Part Three

Chapter Five

I. Foreword to Barth's "Wittgensteinianism".

Notwithstanding that the centre-piece of Popperian philosophy of science - the falsifiability criterion - overturned Hume's principle of induction, the argument that the interface of the theological realm must be a legitimate target for criticism from the plane of the external perspective aligns Popperians to Hume in one important respect: the former resolve the metatheological dilemma the same way Hume (and Overbeck) do. In other words, such criticism is inescapably non-theological (equally appropriate in principle to the criticism of non-theological disciplines: physics, chemistry, biology, anthropology, psychology, sociology).

Thus to Pannenberg (and Bartley) Barth was left with a paradox: on the one hand it appeared as if his resolution of the metatheological dilemma invited the charge of fideism, but on the other hand the kind of criticism the Popperians demanded compromised the identity of *sui generis* theology. The choice seemed to lie between theology but fideistic, or rational but non-theology.

In his resolution of Hume's metaphilosophical dilemma Kant's solution to this particular paradox was the introduction of a third species of reasoning, transcendental reasoning, alongside Hume's inductive and deductive reasoning.

Barth's solution is even more radical, involving a complete break with apologetic reasoning.¹ To be sure, even though one can accept the premise of the Pannenberg-Bartley thesis that the interface of Barth's theological realm is immune from criticism, it does not follow that fideism is a logical consequence. In other words, that the interface of Barth's theological realm is immune from criticism may

¹ Thus when Barth asserted that "a statement about God is a theological statement only when it does not belong to a *rational* theology" (quoted in Pannenberg, *Science*, 274), he meant any species of *apologetic* theology, not that he was advocating a *non-rational* theology. Scholz's contention that "it was not clear what such a statement would be" (*Ibid*, 274), is merely an expression of the widespread belief that only apologetic theology is rational theology, because only apologetic theology incorporates rational criticism.

be a necessary condition for fideism but it is not a sufficient one.

The reason can be given by means of an instantly recognisable Wittgensteinian aphorism. To be sure, Barth's theology "leaves everything as it is", which is to say, there *is* no such thing as criticism of the interface of the theological realm. But, contrary to Pannenberg and Bartley, it does not then follow that there is no such thing as rational criticism *per se*. For it does not then follow the traditional philosopher cannot be persuaded of the rationality (on his own grounds for what constitutes rationality) of relinquishing the plane of the external perspective. He really can be said to take up a place on the external perspective but only as if he accepted it, only, that is, in order to relinquish it on grounds that the traditional philosopher would find acceptable (he dons the guise of the traditional philosopher but only in order to subject it to criticism.). In another recognisably Wittgensteinian idiom, what Barth offers us is a hermeneutic designed to do a "job on the philosopher in us". In other words, the philosopher (the traditional philosopher) can evaluate and judge - *criticise* - whether that which is "left alone" (the interface of the theological realm) constitutes *sufficient conditions* for relinquishing the plane of the external perspective. In that sense the interface of the theological realm is continuous with the plane of the external perspective rather than discontinuous. Rationality turns on itself, devours itself. Barth is a theologian of meta-Enlightenment.

The case for such an interpretation of Barth (and Wittgenstein) will be made in the next three chapters. This chapter serves to set the scene: on the one hand what it is that finally circumscribes the (interface of the) theological realm in Barth, and, on the other, what it is that finally represents the agenda of traditional Western philosophy over the last three hundred and fifty years.

II. The Interface of the Theological Realm Once Again: Faith Described in Terms of its Object.

Clearly if the above rendering of Barth's theology is valid, the account of prototypical revelation advanced thus far (in chapter 4) is incomplete and must be augmented. If the traditional philosopher is to be put into the position just indicated,

sui generis rationality on its own is not sufficient. Therefore we examine something else Barth took from the Easter story. There we encounter *inter alia* two giants of twentieth century theology, Barth and Bultmann, one against the other in a debate that signalled to some the era of Barth was over.

It is a perception that Barth seriously misconstrued Bultmann's theology, both in *Church Dogmatics III/2* in the later 1940s and in the later *Rudolf Bultmann: An Attempt to Understand Him* in the early 1950s.² Whether or not the perception was valid, it was as a consequence of this that Bultmann's theology - untouched or so it seemed by Barth's arguments - appeared to have won the day; which is to say, it is another common perception that Barth came off worse in the controversy. This particular conclusion did not in actual fact follow, but to observers it looked as if Bultmann had Barth in his sights - with all the deadly implications dealt out by a cogent argument - while Barth was aiming at the wrong target, and a straw-man at that. Barth declined to carry on the debate in public and retired as it were to continue the *Church Dogmatics* and write the *Doctrine of Reconciliation*. But his debate with Bultmann did not go away. In the foreword to *Church Dogmatics VI/1* written in June 1953:

The present theological situation and also the particular themes of this book have made it necessary for me throughout to engage in an intensive though, for the most part, implicit conversation with Rudolf Bultmann. His name does not appear often, but his arguments have always been in my mind, even in places where, with his method and his results in view, I have deliberately ignored him.³

The present theological situation was no less than that Bultmann's star was in the ascendant and Barth felt duty bound to combat this state of affairs. However, it was less Bultmann's method of demythologising and more its result - Bultmann's theological existentialist philosophy of the human being - to which Barth objected: "What caused my restraint against [Bultmann] was less his 'demythologising' of the

² For such a view of Barth's interpretation of Bultmann in *CD III/2* p443ff, see G Bornkamm, "The Theology of Rudolf Bultmann", in C W Kegley *The Theology of Rudolf Bultmann* (London, SCM Press, 1966), 13-17. For an objection to Barth's "Rudolf Bultmann: An Attempt to Understand Him", see J M McQuarrie, "Philosophy and Theology in Bultmann's Thought" in Kegley *The Theology of Rudolf Bultmann*, 140.

³ Barth, *CD IV/1*, ix.

New Testament as his 'existentialist interpretation' of its statements".⁴ In a letter dated 29 May 1947 to Bishop Wurm of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany, predating the debate proper with Bultmann, Barth made an indirect reply to a certain Pastor Brun who had objected to the Marburg theologian's statements on the 'legend of the empty tomb' and the 'marvel of the resurrection'. Bultmann's statements, Barth said

*could in themselves be taken in a good sense. The term "legend" may simply denote the literary genre of the Easter stories of the Gospel (a necessary one in virtue of their unique content). The resurrection of the one who is dead and buried, or his existence as the one who is now alive, obviously cannot be reported in the form of a "historical narrative" but only as a "saga" or a "legend". This term says nothing about whether what is reported really happened or not. It may relate to real history which took place in space and time but cannot be told "historically". [...] In this sense I too [like Bultmann] can and must describe the Easter story as a "legend".*⁵

But then Barth goes on:

For myself ... [i]t is here that discussion should begin; the mere assertion that Bultmann used the term "legend" does not touch upon the truly serious question that needs to be put to him.

The same applies to the derogatory expression "marvel". [...] I must assume that Bultmann meant it differently, i.e., that by means of it he wished to put the fact of the resurrection truly and definitively in the realm of credulous fancy. This and not the mere use of the term is what we need to discuss with him.⁶

Hence while Barth too categorised the resurrection stories as saga or legend in VI/1, he disagreed with Bultmann when the latter drew the implication of "myth". Barth objected to this term. In a letter to a Herr Herrenbruck dated 15 February 1952 he wrote:

I think that one can only demythologise demythologising by a better explanation of what Bultmann and his followers seem to have understood as no more than "myth" and shudder at with horror again and again.⁷

What in Barth's theology constitutes this "better explanation"? In the particular passage in IV/1 from which we take our exegetical point of departure Barth is quietly doing battle with Bultmann's conviction that the resurrection stories

⁴ Busch, *Barth*, 386.

⁵ B Japert (ed), *Karl Barth-Rudolf Bultmann: Letters 1922-1966*, translated and edited by G W Bromiley, (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1982) 143-144.

⁶ *Ibid*, 143-144.

⁷ Busch, *Barth*, 337-8.

denote the formation of the faith of the disciples and nothing more:

But if [the Easter happening] is restricted to the development of the faith of the disciples, what can this mean? A kind of parthenogenesis of faith without any external cause; without any cause in an external event which begets it? A faith which is in the true sense otherworldly? A Nevertheless which reaches out defiantly, Prometheus-like, into the void and posits and maintains itself there? [...] And certainly God might have created this faith in the form of a *creation ex nihilo*. But then we would have to reckon with the fact that, under the name of faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ as the Resurrected, the Church and the New Testament were really believing in the development of this Easter faith of the disciples as a *creatio ex nihilo*. And we should then have to admit that the riddle which replaces the riddle posed in the texts as they are is not an easier but a more difficult one. This interpretation will no doubt suit those who think that truth is more likely to be found where the paradox is more severe. If only we had one example in the Bible of God creating faith out of nothing in this way! If only the texts gave us some slight indication that in the happening reported by them they were at bottom speaking of such a *creatio ex nihilo*! If only they demanded that we look in this direction! But most definitely they do not demand it.⁸

But if they do not speak of it, what do they speak of? This is Barth's answer:

Like the rest of the Bible, they speak of a foundation of faith which comes [widerfahrenden] to those who have it, of a faith which is described in terms of its object [einer den beteiligten Menschen Begründung ihres Glauben, von seiner Bezeichnung von seinem Gegenstand her].⁹

Barth goes on:

And it is this foundation, an act of God fashioned as this object, a series of appearances and sayings of Jesus Christ risen from the dead and raised from the tomb, which is plainly the theme of their affirmation and the content of their narrative. That they speak of this (and only in the light of it of the rise of that original form of the faith of the disciples) is the presupposition of the rest of the New Testament. Whatever attitude we take up, an exegesis of these texts has to grapple with the fact that this is the theme of their affirmation and the content of their narrative.¹⁰

Barth rejects Bultmann's reading of the resurrection stories. For him they speak of a foundation of faith which comes to those who have it, of a faith which is described in terms of its object, the resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ, prototypical revelation.

The significance of Barth's answer extends beyond the debate with Bultmann. The *sui generis* rationality of saga and legend, of prototypical revelation, is (collectively) no less than: faith described in terms of its object.

⁸ Barth, *CD* IV/1, 339-40.

⁹ *Ibid*, 340.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 340.

It is a fact of Barth scholarship that this exegetical formula has received little if no examination or (even) attention either by those in the business of exegeting Barth volume by volume or by those whose exegesis and interpretation is less tied to the texts.¹¹ Yet it is of critical importance for Barth's continuing belief in the genuine autonomy of theology. For faith described in terms of its object is faith described *in terms of* its object. This implies that insofar as we have to do with the *sui generis* object of theology - God (God is *God*) - there is no logical space for residual heteronomous non-theological forces in this formula. This is as it should be since prototypical revelation is "exclusively the act of God", as opposed to the pre-Easter sequence of events which "have a component of human action."¹² God is *God* is once more the supreme issue on Barth's agenda.

Indeed, more so, for one could say that with the *Church Dogmatics* Barth has finally excised the non-theological residue that, for all his vigilance, had slipped unmistakably, and perhaps inevitably, into *Romans II*. For with faith described in terms of the object at the centre of Barth's *sui generis* theological epistemology, there was no room for the dialectical method, which method is the achilles heel of *Romans II* in that it is (inherently) insufficiently *sui generis*. The story that dialectical *method* dropped out of the latter Dogmatic phase of Barth's theology is accepted naturally by those who, like von Balthasar, Frei, Torrance and Jüngel, champion a turn from dialectic to analogy but also by those who, like McCormack, maintain Barth remained a dialectical theologian. (It goes without saying that the latter have in mind the continuing presence of another kind of dialectic.) The assertion that the dialectical method is inherently insufficiently *sui generis* follows from the statement that such a method could conceivably be used in other (non-theological) fields.¹³ But now with faith *described in terms of* its object, not only

¹¹ There is no mention of it in G W Bromiley's commentary. See G W Bromiley, *An Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1979), 183-4. Neither is it referred to in the otherwise magisterial works of Torrance, Jüngel, and von Balthasar.

¹² Barth, *CD IV/1*, 300.

¹³ McCormack's observation that Barth's use of "dialectic" is not formally consistent with any one definition of dialectic (e.g., Platonic, Kantian, Hegelian, Kierkegaardian) but is rather a function of Barth's own strictly theological aims is not relevant here. McCormack, "Scholastic", 124. The

is non-theology eliminated and excluded but only that which is *sui generis* theology is included.

III. Faith Described in Terms of its Object Surfaces in *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum*.

Faith described in terms of its object is crucial to Barth's whole anti-epistemological project. The key to understanding the phrase is Barth's book on Anselm, *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, the subject-matter of which was Anselm's Proof of the Existence of God from *Proslogion* 2-4. *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* coincided with the spirit of faith described in terms of its object to the extent that it constituted Barth's own contribution to a *sui generis* autonomous theological epistemology. It was, as Torrance recognised, Barth's attempt to make theology stand on its own feet.¹⁴ Hence it aimed to preserve the *sui generis* autonomy of theology.¹⁵

Moreover, Barth referred to the book as just such a key himself but without necessarily expressing surprise that other theologians failed to see this. The famous passage from the second preface to the book has been quoted many times:

Only a comparatively few commentators, for example Hans Urs von Balthasar, have realised that my interest in Anselm was never a side-issue for me. On the contrary, whether my historical interpretation of the saint is right or not, I took him much to heart and absorbed him into my own line of thinking. Most commentators have completely failed to see that with this Anselm book I was working with a vital key, if not the key, to an understanding of that whole process of thought that has impressed me more and more in my *Church Dogmatics* as the only one proper to theology.¹⁶

Here Barth speaks of the significance of his book on Anselm for an

point is that one can still assert that *as Barth uses it*, dialectical method would not have been out of place in other *non-theological* fields.

¹⁴ Torrance describes it as "theology in its own right." Torrance, *Introduction*, 180.

¹⁵ "In these years [1928-1938] I have had to rid myself of the last remnants of a philosophical, i.e., anthropological (in America one says "humanistic" or "naturalistic") foundation and exposition of Christian doctrine. The real document of this farewell is, in truth, not the much-read brochure *Nein!*, directed against Brunner in 1934, but rather the evidence for God of Anselm of Canterbury which appeared in 1931." Barth, *How I Changed My Mind*, 42-43.

¹⁶ Barth, *FQI*, 11.

understanding of the *Church Dogmatics*. The first thing to be aware of is the year of the statement. Barth wrote it in 1958, late into his work, by which time he had already completed the first two parts of the Doctrine of Reconciliation, *Church Dogmatics* IV/1 and IV/2. Even given the conspicuous absence of any reference to *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* in these volumes Barth indicates that its insights apply just as much there as to the earlier ones. *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* is in no sense repudiated by what Barth has to say in these later volumes. But Barth also says that the whole process of thought embodied in *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* impressed him "more and more in his *Church Dogmatics* as the only one proper to theology". Note he says: "more and more". It is as if Barth perceived retrospectively that the later work was just as much imbued with the spirit and substance of *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* as the earlier volumes; even, that had he the gift of perfect foresight at the time of writing the relatively more mundane first preface, the contrast between the first and the second would not have been so marked.¹⁷

Finally, Barth refers to the Anselm book as a "vital key, if not the key to this whole process of thought". The German word Barth uses for "key" is *ein Schlüssel* which can mean either that the Anselm book is crucial in providing an explanation or interpretation of the process of thought in the *Church Dogmatics* or that it is itself a decoding *text*, hermeneutically speaking, for unlocking the meaning of the *Church Dogmatics*.

Notwithstanding Anselm's historical identification of the object of faith with the *Credo* of the Church,¹⁸ faith described in terms of its object surfaces at a particular point in Barth's book on Anselm. That point is the subsection in Part I entitled "The Path of Theology" [*Der Weg der Theologie*]. The rationale behind translating *Der Weg der Theologie* as "The Path of Theology" rather than, as one

¹⁷ McCormack argues that the first preface is nearer the truth of the significance of *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* than the second (at least within the confines of the years 1921-1931). McCormack, "Scholastic", 549. The "mundane" first preface is certainly nearer the genesis and completion of the book in historical time but it does not then follow that it constitutes in any sense the 'final' significance of the work in the fullness of time. Thus I read the relationship between the two prefaces the other way round: not that the second preface is out of joint with the first, but that the first is out of joint with the second.

¹⁸ *FQI*, 40passim.

translator has it, "The Manner of Theology"¹⁹ is that the *Denkbewegung* of the *Church Dogmatics* to which Barth refers in the second preface is none other than the path of theology delineated in the section "The Path of Theology".

It has been said *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* is a book about Anselm and not about Barth.²⁰ Certainly this remains true however much it tells us about Barth rather than about Anselm. But it does not then follow that the book cannot also tell us something crucial about the *Church Dogmatics*, something latent or rather immanent awaiting elicitation. Indeed, that the book may tell us more about Barth's own agenda than Anselm (that it deviates from a faithful reading of the eleventh-century monk)²¹ would be one such premise from which one could build the conclusion that the two descriptions are not necessarily mutually exclusive, indeed, are mutually inclusive.

But that it constitutes Barth's own contribution to a *sui generis* autonomous theological epistemology (and is therefore implicated as the prototypical *Denkbewegung* of the *Church Dogmatics*, preserving the *sui generis* autonomy of theology), means that *sui generis* theological truth extends not only to the *sui generis* rationality of e.g., angels, the Virgin Birth, the empty tomb, etc.; it means that it also extends to itself as it appears in the *Church Dogmatics* though of course not abstracted from the object of faith. That is to say, the subject-matter of *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum* is the *sui generis* theological truth of proof of the existence of God. To this extent it is to be read literally; in this sense the *Denkbewegung* maps on to itself. *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* coincides with the

¹⁹ Barth, *FQI*, 40.

²⁰ McCormack, "Scholastic", 520.

²¹ Both J Hopkins and M J Charlesworth accuse Barth of projecting his own theological agenda into Anselm's *Proslogion*. J Hopkins, *A Companion to the Study of St. Anselm* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1972), 57-61; M J Charlesworth, *St. Anselm's Proslogion: with A Reply on Behalf of the Fool by Guanilo and The Author's Reply to Guanilo*, translated with an introduction and philosophical commentary by Charlesworth, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1965), 40-46.

spirit of faith described in terms of its object.²²

IV. The *Ratio* of the Object of Faith is Taken Up Into [*Mitaufgenommene*] the Knowledge of the Object of Faith.

The precise spot where faith described in terms of its object surfaces in "The Path of Theology" is at the spot where Barth describes the *ratio* of the object of faith as being "taken up into" [*mitaufgenommene*] into the knowledge of the object of faith.²³ Note first the reference to *Glaubengegenstand*. This is a term used no less than twenty-eight times on pages 48-53 of *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, the pages on which Barth expounds on the meaning of *ratio* in both its ontic and noetic sense in the section "The Path of Theology".²⁴ This could be put down to a coincidence of use but Barth does not speak merely of *Glaubengegenstand*, he speaks of *seiner Bezeichnung von seinem Gegenstand her* (faith's description in terms of its object). In "The Path of Theology" this is how Barth describes the relation between the object of faith and faith itself. It is not merely that the ontic *ratio* precedes the noetic *ratio* or that the noetic *ratio* follows the ontic *ratio*; it is that the noetic *ratio* is described in terms of the ontic *ratio*. The *ratio* of the object

²² If faith described in terms of its object can be validly grafted on to or into *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* it would follow that, contrary to P Rosato, the Holy Spirit as depicted in the New Testament would have no significant role to play in *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*. P Rosato S. J., *The Spirit as Lord: The Pneumatology of Karl Barth* (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1981), 38-43.

²³ *Mitaufgenommene* is a crucial concept in Barth's thinking from *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* onwards. That it constitutes the essential analytic *a posteriori* dimension to Barth's interpretation of Anselm's proof of the existence of God is confirmed in CD I/2, 459-535, where Barth identifies it as an analytic concept (though one that is *a posteriori*). Chapter 8 of this thesis examines *mitgenommene*'s implication of analyticity as it occurs in Barth's treatment of hermeneutics. The analytic dimension to *mitgenommene* would pave the way for similarly interpreting faith described in terms of its object, even though, as will be seen in chapter 7, faith described in terms of its object can justify this interpretation on its own.

²⁴ It is to be noted too that, where Barth speaks of *Eigenart* in CD IV/1 (Barth CD IV/1, 334-336), in *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, he speaks of *Eigene* no less than seven times (Barth *FQI*, 48-50) when he speaks of the *ratio* peculiar [*eigene*] to the existence and mode of existence of the object of faith. *Ibid*, 50). At IV/1 he speaks of the history - and therefore the existence - peculiar to the object of faith as fashioned in the resurrection appearances. Barth, CD IV/1, 340. Apart from furnishing decisive evidence that the concept of *sui generis* theological truth is present in *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, it lends further support to identifying *faith described in terms of its object* with the *ratio of the object of faith being taken up into knowledge of the object of faith*.

is "taken up into" the conception of the object of faith [*das Denken des Glaubensgegenstand*].²⁵

First, faith in the Anselm book is itself an immanent understanding or *intelligere*.²⁶ Second, *intelligere* is to be defined in its "narrower stricter sense" as *ratio*.²⁷ Third, *ratio* has two denotations, one subjective and one objective. On the one hand it is used to "denote the means to the desired *intellectus*" and, on the other, it is used to "denote the desired *intellectus* itself, that which is to be known, the *ratio* that belongs to the object of faith."²⁸ Barth goes on to conclude that in effect faith is an immanent *intelligere* only in so far as the *ratio* of the object of faith is taken up into [*mitaufgenommene*] the knowledge of the object of faith itself:

The *ratio* peculiar to the knowledge of the object of faith is the conception of the conformity to law of the existence and particular existence of the object of faith taken up into the conception of the object of faith itself. The *ratio* is the understanding of this knowledge in so far as it characterises it as the understanding of the object of faith by a being capable of comprehending an existence and a particular existence that conform to law.²⁹

In other words, it "speaks of the objective *ratio* proper to the object of faith."³⁰

²⁵ Barth, *FQI*, 50.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 16.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 44.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 44.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 50. This passage is in fact proposition (4) of a logical structure encompassing fourteen propositions. The first four of this structure are the underlying premises of the whole structure. However (4) is singled out because it is quite simply where faith is described in terms of its object surfaces in *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*. The other three go as follows:

"(1) The *necessitas* that is peculiar to the object of faith is the impossibility of the object of faith not existing or of being otherwise than it is. The *necessitas* is its basis inasmuch as it does not permit it to cease to exist.

(2) The *necessitas* that is peculiar to knowledge of the object of faith is the impossibility for thought to conceive the object of faith as not existing or existing differently. The *necessitas* establishes this knowledge in so far as it is the negation achieved by thought of the non-existence or different existence excluded by the *necessitas* of the object of faith.

(3) The *ratio* that is peculiar to the object of faith is the fact that its existence conforms to law and that it exists in this particular way. The *ratio* is the rationality of the object in so far as it makes it intelligible to a being who can understand an existence and a particular existence that conform to law." *Ibid*, 50-2.

The essential thing to point out is that none of the three refute the identification of faith described in terms of its object with (4).

³⁰ *Ibid*, 48-9.

V. A Historical Example of the External Perspective: the Classical Modern Philosophical Tradition of Descartes through to Kant.

Juxtaposed to Barth's theological realm - to faith described in terms of its object - is the philosopher's external perspective. This section is written with the purpose of providing a determinate structure to the plane of the external perspective hitherto spoken of in general terms only. The classical modern philosophical tradition from Descartes to Kant serves that purpose.

The survey is not intended as an exhaustive survey of each and every philosopher of that period; rather its aim is to delineate somewhat in the spirit of Thomas Nagel's aphorism - "philosophy is how things in the broadest sense hang together in the broadest sense" - the broadest most fundamental structures of that tradition. Even then, this remit is subject to the constraint such that it will not be each and every philosopher we tackle but only those who serve to put in sharp focus these fundamental principles: principally Descartes, Hume and Kant. Finally, the survey will consider only two philosophical problems from that period: the existence of God and the existence of the external world.

To the extent that the classical modern philosophical tradition determined the specific means by which the principles of autonomy and criticism would be fulfilled, it constitutes the historical orthodoxy of the two pillars on which the Enlightenment project was built. Bartley and Pannenberg's philosophical heritage of critical rationalism, continuous as it is with the Enlightenment ethos proper to the Age of Criticism and the Age of Philosophy, can be said with little qualification to be a historical development of this tradition since the external perspective implicit in their criticism of Barth and Wittgenstein is co-extensive with it.

The classical philosophical tradition beginning with Descartes and running through the rationalists Spinoza and Leibniz, the British empiricists, Locke, Berkeley and Hume, to Kant is a specific sub-history of the Enlightenment. Although Descartes lived outside the dates traditionally designated as constituting the Enlightenment period proper,³¹ it is clear that the French Enlightenment in its

³¹ Gay designates 1688-1789 as the period proper. Gay, *Enlightenment*, 17.

earlier phase held him to be a pivotal influence.³² Though Descartes is loyal in his avowed subjugation to the authority of the Church, the critical attitude displayed in his method of systematic doubt (but suspended with respect to Church dogma) is the precursor to an enquiring mind that will knock on every door, even that of the Church's. In other words Descartes is a pioneer of the Enlightenment.

Moreover, the term "classical" can be traced to the Enlightenment debt owed to, and inspiration derived from, the Greek and Roman ideals of classical antiquity, a heritage whose assimilation into Western civilisation had been going on at least since the Renaissance and reached its apogee with the Enlightenment.³³ In tandem with the later Enlightenment philosophers who drew extensively from this legacy,³⁴ it is now known that the course of Descartes' *Meditations* was influenced by the arguments of the Ancient Sceptics and Sextus Empiricus in particular.³⁵ Descartes sought to prove - as against the Sceptics - a proposition or propositions which could not conceivably be doubted. The first of Descartes' *Meditations* is in fact a rehash of ancient scepticism.³⁶

Two principles emerged *sui generis* from the classical modern philosophical tradition of Descartes through to Kant.³⁷ The first is what Richard Rorty has

³² The French *philosophe* D'Alembert's fulsome praise of Descartes is especially noteworthy in this respect. See J Ree, "Descartes and History", *Descartes* (London, Allen Lane, 1974), 151-7, esp. 153.

³³ Gay, *Enlightenment*, vol 1, 31-203.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 9-10.

³⁵ E M Curley, *Descartes Against the Sceptics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1978); R Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes* (Assen, Van Goram, 1964), 172-192.

³⁶ M Burnyeat, "Idealism and Greek Philosophy: What Descartes Saw and Berkeley Missed", in Vesey (ed), *Idealism Past and Present*. Royal Institute of Philosophy Lecture Series: 13. Supplement to *Philosophy* 1982 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982), 45.

³⁷ "Classical modern" is taken from R Schacht. R Schacht, *Classical Modern Philosophers: Descartes to Kant* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984).

termed "truth as representation".³⁸ Truth as representation or correspondence (whether direct or indirect, e.g., analogical) is closely linked with realism - the belief that statements are determined as true or false with reference to an independent reality and therefore may be thought to have determinate truth-value (even though we may not be in a position to know what this is). Accordingly, the objective of the philosopher is to close this "realist gap" between statement and fact. A general principle of truth (see chapter 1), it is also classical in proportion, at bottom a symmetrical principle: a statement is either true or it is false. (Philosophers also know this principle as the principle of bivalence). The second principle is the principle of proof. Since the propositions of philosophy could be either true or false, there had to be some rational method of distinguishing the true representation from the false. Accordingly, the task of the philosopher consisted in providing rational grounds or foundations for the acceptance or rejection of proposed representations (Rorty calls this "apodeictic truth").³⁹ These two principles have constituted the canon of rational modern philosophical enquiry, an external perspective by and against which philosophers have measured their endeavours.

(i) The symmetrical principle of truth

To the popular but not necessarily uninformed philosophical consciousness, it is still Descartes, Plato notwithstanding, who, more than any other philosopher, epitomises the philosophic spirit. He personifies the quintessence of this spirit: he withdraws to the quiet of his fireside chair and sits in dressing gown, undressed of the civic duties and burdens of this world, in order to contemplate that same world *sub specie aeternitatis*. Descartes' repose entered the mythology of the philosophical life and emerged triumphantly as metaphor. For what is it a metaphor? It is a metaphor for freedom, freedom from prejudice, self-interest, anything in fact which

³⁸ "Philosophy's central concern is to be a general theory of representation, a theory which will divide culture into areas which represent well, those which represent it less well, and those which do not represent it at all (despite their pretence at doing so)." R Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1980), 3.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 166.

prevents or hinders us from seeing and so representing things as they really are. (His celebrated method of systematic doubt is the method *par excellence* of the philosopher who forgoes prejudice and self-interest and rigorously forces himself to doubt against his natural inclination.) It is also then at bottom a metaphor of the disinterested pursuit of the truth, a pursuit which means the distinguishing of the true from the false.⁴⁰

To the extent that Descartes' project of pure enquiry was motivated by a desire to put the science of his day on a firm foundation,⁴¹ this separation of the true from the false presupposed a single concept of truth operating throughout the edifice of knowledge, whether at its foundations or at the outlying reaches of its superstructure. That is to say, to take an example from *Meditation II*, the proposition that wax melts when heated, if true, is true in the same sense in which the more basic (foundational) proposition that the external world exists, if true, is true; and both if true are true in the same sense in which the proposition that God exists, if true, is true. The concept of truth under scrutiny here is a *de dicto* truth concept and not a *de re* one: nothing is said about the mode of God's existence (e.g., whether necessary or contingent, eternal or temporal, etc.). It is the sense in which something is true that is important and this is the same throughout Descartes' edifice of knowledge. This explains Descartes' attempt to weld together knowledge of self, knowledge of the existence of the external world, and knowledge of the existence of God, in such a way as to make knowledge of the second (and less directly the first) depend on knowledge of the third.⁴²

It is difficult to underestimate the extent to which this principle became axiomatic for the tradition that began with Descartes and culminated in Kant. Even

⁴⁰ See first paragraph of Descartes' *Meditations* I. R Descartes, *Discourse on Method and the Meditations* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1968), 95-96. See also B Williams, *Descartes: The Project of Pure Enquiry* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1978), 32-37. Williams argues that truth was the motive-force behind Descartes' project of pure enquiry.

⁴¹ Descartes, *Discourse*, 95. See also J L Watling, "Descartes", in O'Connor, (ed), *A Critical History of Western Philosophy* (New York, The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), 171.

⁴² See Williams, *Descartes*, chapters 5 (esp. 162) and 7, for an account of Descartes' failure in this respect.

Kant whose *Critique of Pure Reason* served both as culmination and ultimate critique of the tradition, did not take issue with the principle. For although he distinguished between these philosophical problems the solution of which lay within the realm of reason from those which did not,⁴³ he did not think that the proposition God exists, if true, was true in a different sense from the sense in which the proposition the external world exists, if true, was true. He merely thought that where reason could prove the latter, it could not (endowed as it was with limits), prove the former, except as a practical *a priori* synthetic truth issuing from a moral postulate. Hence that the proposition God exists was either true or false, Kant did not question for a second.

Given the logical nexus between truth as representation and realism it would be a mistake not to classify Descartes, Hume and Kant as individual endorsements of realism. For according to this sense of the term Descartes was realist about the existence of the external world because he believed that either the external world existed or the external world did not exist. And similarly, Kant was a theological realist in that he endorsed the symmetry of either God exists is true or God exists is false.

Indeed, Kant's realism with respect to the existence of God is no less the case than that of Descartes' or Hume's. In Kant's scheme, *a priori* synthetic truths articulate the conditions of the possibility of experience, constituting both a framework and a boundary within which empirical truth is apprehended. Thus, for instance, the *a priori* synthetic principle 'Every event has a cause' specifies both a framework and a boundary within which empirical science establishes its truths. In Kant's philosophy the human mind is a 'grid' through and by which reality is perceived and ordered according to the organising principles of the mind. Consequently the reality we perceive enters into a dependent functional relationship

⁴³ Kant classified three philosophical problems as being properly beyond the limits of reason, and therefore a matter of metaphysics. These were the problems of: God, freedom and immortality. Kant, *Critique*, 325n. For Kant, the problem of the existence of the external world was an example of a philosophical problem whose solution lay *within* the limits of reason. Hence he proceeds to offer his own proof of the existence of the external world. *Ibid*, 242. The point is that Kant's noumenon-phenomenon "dualism" does not impinge upon the symmetrical principle at all: if such a dualism were true it would not affect the symmetrical principle of truth.

with our mental structures, in particular, the *a priori* synthetic categories. However, the proposition 'God exists' is not *a priori* synthetic truth in Kant's philosophy (nor is the proposition 'The external world exists'). Thus there is no reason why Kant cannot be considered a theological realist, much in the same way as he can about the external world.

In a similar such manner, Descartes' and Hume's legacy of the epistemological precedence of the subjective (the contents of one's mind) over the objective (the external world) has no logical bearing on the question whether they are realist in the sense defined. What does have a bearing is their endorsement of truth as the *representation* of reality.

(ii) The Principle of Proof

Were it not for Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* it would be completely accurate to say that alongside, or in the wake of, the symmetrical principle of truth existed a second principal attribute of the classical modern philosophical tradition. We have termed this the principle of deductive (or inductive) proof. Since the propositions of philosophy could be either true or false, there had to be some rational method for distinguishing the true from the false. Accordingly, the task of the philosopher consisted in providing rational grounds or foundations for the acceptance or rejection of proposed solutions to philosophical problems. Rational grounds in the context of the classical philosophical tradition meant nothing other than deductive proof or explanation. A proof consisted of a set of logically sufficient conditions for the truth of the philosophical proposition such that if the premises were true and the structure of the argument valid the conclusion had to be true.

Kant's critique of metaphysics, specifically the assertion that proof of the existence of God was a formal impossibility, undermined the hitherto unquestioned belief that the concept of proof was applicable in all the traditional domains of philosophy. Still, it is an ill-considered judgement that excises the concept of proof from the classical modern tradition. For Kant agreed with his immediate philosophical predecessors that the function of philosophy was to provide proof in those areas where it was possible. On the question of the existence of the external

world he wrote:

It still remains a scandal to philosophy and to human reason in general that the existence of things outside us (from which we derive the whole material of knowledge, even for our inner sense) must be accepted merely on faith, and if anyone thinks good to doubt their existence, we are unable to counter his doubt by any satisfactory proof.⁴⁴

Both Descartes and Hume had already come to a similar conclusion on this question. The aim of Descartes' method of systematic doubt is to separate out what was reliably believed from what was not, which for Descartes means separating what cannot be denied without contradiction from what can be derived as the conclusion of a deductively valid proof. To this end, he doubts the existence of physical objects such as the sky and earth, his own body; finally, he questions his own existence.⁴⁵ He concludes that he can conceivably doubt all the aforementioned bar the last, bar his own existence: "I am, I exist, is necessarily true", he asserts. The sense of Descartes' "is necessarily true" is not the *de re* sense committing him to the assertion of his own necessary existence but rather the *de dicto* sense where it means "cannot not be derived without contradiction". Hence he means to say that it is a deductively proved argument. Hence proof of the existence of the external world is assimilated and discussed in the context of the larger project of what one can and cannot *prove*:

... I am the same being who senses, that is to say who apprehends and knows things, as by the sense-organs, since in truth I see light, hear noise and feel heat. But it will be said that I am dreaming. Let it be so; all the same, at least it is very certain [cannot be doubted] that it seems to me that I see light, hear a noise, feel heat; and this is properly what in me is called perceiving⁴⁶

Since an idea is "that which the mind directly perceives"⁴⁷ - it follows that where one has incorrigible knowledge of one's own inner mental phenomena, one does not of the external world. Thus it is that Descartes aims to show 'how it is easier to know the mind than the body': "I see a tree" can be doubted without

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 34.

⁴⁵ Descartes, *Meditation* II, 103.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 107.

⁴⁷ Descartes, Reply to the Third Set of Objections to the *Meditations*, No 5. Quoted in A Kenny, "Descartes on Ideas" in W Doney, *Descartes*, (New York, MacMillan, 1967), 239.

contradiction but not "I seem to see a tree".

Hume followed Descartes' reasoning on this philosophical problem: it cannot "be proved that the perceptions of the mind must be caused by external objects" This is because "the mind never has anything present to it but the perceptions."⁴⁸ We have direct access to our perceptions but not to the external world. Our belief in the existence of the external world is an inference based on habit rather than on deductive proof. What Hume would call rational justification is missing.⁴⁹

Before Kant, the concept of proof was the *sine qua non* of the classical modern tradition's understanding of the problem of the existence of God.⁵⁰ If it is at least open to question that St Thomas Aquinas meant his *Five Ways* more as probable arguments than stringently deductive proofs,⁵¹ there is less room for manoeuvre with respect to the philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the wake of the societal changes of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and in particular, the relative decline of Church authority and influence, philosophy was free as it had not been before to embark on a project of statement,

⁴⁸ Hume, *Enquiry*, 162. See also Flew, *Hume*, chapter 1, "The Interlocking Cartesian Assumptions", 12-17,

⁴⁹ Hume, *Enquiry*, 151.

⁵⁰ In addition to its devastating critical effect, Kant's critique of the classical proofs distinguishes him as the great codifier and classifier of the proofs of the existence of God. For Kant each and every proof belongs to one of three categories: the physico-theological proof; the cosmological proof; and the ontological proof. All such attempts he writes

"either begin with determinate experience and the special constitution of the world of sense experience ... or they begin with a purely indeterminate experience, that is, some empirical existent; or abstraction is made from all experience and the existence of a Supreme Being is inferred from *a priori* concepts alone." Kant, *Critique*, 499-500.

⁵¹ Lindbeck takes the view that even when St Thomas is most the apologist as in demonstrating the existence of God, his proofs are, by his own account, "probable arguments" in support of faith rather than parts of an independent foundational enterprise. Lindbeck, *Doctrine*, 131. A Kenny is of the opposite opinion: "I shall not discuss how seriously St. Thomas meant the Five Ways as proofs. Some have suggested that they are arguments he is quoting rather than using; others have said they are not proofs, but rather ways of giving content to the notion of divinity. I myself think St. Thomas meant them as seriously as he meant any other philosophical proof; but I shall not argue the point. I am interested in whether the arguments found in the *Summa Theologiae* do in fact constitute a rational proof of God's existence, rather than in whether St. Thomas himself thought they did or not." A Kenny, *The Five Ways. St Thomas Aquinas' Proofs of God's Existence* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 1.

restatement and counter-statement of what have become known as the classical proofs of the existence of God. While the impetus of the substance and framework of the discussion came from St Thomas Aquinas,⁵² the degree of scrutiny and standard of stringency required of a proof was uniquely the tradition's own.

Concluding Remarks.

Having provided an exposition of the two principles as the two fundamental structures of the classical modern philosophical tradition I want to draw some conclusions on the logical relations existing between them. The logical relations between the two principles can indeed be formalised:

- (1) The principle of deductive (or inductive) proof entails the symmetrical principle of truth.
- (2) The symmetrical principle of truth does not entail the principle of deductive (or inductive) proof.

Therefore it follows

- (3) If one rejects the symmetrical principle of truth one must reject the principle of deductive (or inductive) proof. But
- (4) If one rejects the principle of deductive (or inductive) proof one need not reject the symmetrical principle of truth.

Thus (4) tells us that one can reject foundationalism without rejecting the symmetrical principle of truth. Similarly, although Kant describes theoretical knowledge of God as speculative and therefore concerned with the concept of an object that cannot be reached in any experience,⁵³ that such speculative knowledge is theoretical knowledge, entails it is knowledge of what is.⁵⁴ Thus Kant's

⁵² Gunton has written that "the pattern of most discussion of the nature and existence of God was laid down in the Middle Ages, classically in the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas. Modern philosophy of religion in the Anglo-Saxon world is still conducted largely against a background of Aquinas's concept and the great critiques of its central doctrines and assumptions in Descartes, Spinoza, Hume, and Kant." Gunton, *Becoming and Being: The Doctrine of God in Charles Hartshorne and Karl Barth* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1978), 1.

⁵³ Kant, *Critique*, 526.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 526.

conclusion is in accord with (4).

This concludes the survey of the two fundamental structures of the classical modern philosophical tradition. It is clear the symmetrical principle of truth is the more fundamental of the two since (i) its refutation would *ipso facto* mean the refutation of the principle of proof but (ii) no such refutation would follow were the converse the case. Accordingly, if Barth's *Church Dogmatics* and Wittgenstein's later philosophy were to constitute only a repudiation of the principle of proof, the symmetrical principle of truth would remain intact, and with it the fundamental motive force of the traditional philosophical conception: to represent the true. In the following chapter we turn to Barth and Wittgenstein's response. The basic argument will be that both constitute a repudiation of the symmetrical principle of truth and that this is done in such a way as to repudiate the principle of proof too.

Chapter Six

I. Complete Commensurability Without Apologetics: Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy Leaves Everything As It Is - Except the Traditional Philosopher.

Phillips' conception of Wittgenstein's later philosophy is sustained in large part by his interpretation of *PI* § 124.¹

Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language, it can in the end only describe it.

For it cannot give it any foundation either.

It leaves everything as it is.²

It is of course precisely because of statements like *PI* § 124 that Wittgenstein has been labelled a fideist by Nielsen, Gellner, Ayer, Grayling (implicitly) and Bartley. But is this label justified? Does it follow that if Wittgenstein insists that the grammar of our interacting language-games and forms of life are immune from philosophical criticism, rational philosophical criticism *per se* has no part to play in the later philosophy?

To be sure, Wittgenstein obviously does say philosophy leaves everything - the grammar of language-games and forms of life - as it is. But it does not then follow there is no room for rational criticism *anywhere at all* in the later philosophy. For it does not then follow that the traditional philosopher cannot be persuaded of the *rationality* of relinquishing the plane of the external perspective, that is, on grounds acceptable to him *as traditional philosopher*, which is to say, on the basis of *his own* criteria for what it is that constitute grounds. The charge of fideism cannot be sustained, not because philosophy does not leave everything as it is in the sense Wittgenstein meant, but because the traditional philosopher can evaluate, judge, and therefore criticise whether he has grounds for relinquishing his perspective.

To be sure, Wittgenstein did believe the later philosophy to be utterly

¹ Phillips, "Religion in Wittgenstein's Mirror", 135. Keightley takes *PI* § 124 as fundamental to Phillips' interpretation of Wittgenstein. Keightley, *Wittgenstein*, 63.

² Wittgenstein, *PI* § 124.

different from traditional philosophy. In the nineteen-thirties he made it clear how he viewed his later philosophy in relation to the previously existing path of philosophy. He claimed that philosophy as he was now practising it was not merely a stage in the continuous development of the subject but a new subject. He declared that his philosophy introduced a "kink" in the evolution of philosophy comparative to that which occurred in physics when Galileo invented dynamics.³ He also said of the later philosophy: "One might say that the subject we are dealing with is one of the heirs that used to be called philosophy."⁴ It is on the basis of such a statement that Henrik von Wright can conclude: "The later Wittgenstein in my view has no ancestors in the history of thought. His work signals a radical departure from previously existing paths of philosophy."⁵ And in a footnote to this comment he adds: "Wittgenstein's so-called later philosophy, as I see it, is quite different [from the philosophy expressed in the *Tractatus*]. Its spirit is unlike anything I know in Western thought and in many ways opposed to the aims and methods of traditional philosophy."⁶

Yet though the later philosophy is, in the words of Bartley, "discourse-orientated", it does not follow that it is not "problem-orientated". It is in fact both.⁷

³ Wittgenstein, "Lectures 1930-1933", in G E Moore, *Philosophical Papers* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1959), 322.

⁴ Wittgenstein, *BB*, 28.

⁵ Von Wright, "Wittgenstein: A Biographical Sketch", 27.

⁶ *Ibid*, 27-28. H Putnam puts it perceptively when he says that Wittgenstein could neither be said to hold what could properly be called a "philosophical view" nor propose any argument "in any traditional philosophical sense". H Putnam, "Review of *The Concept of a Person*", in H Putnam, *Mind, Language and Reality*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975), 134.

⁷ A Quinton's classic essay "Contemporary British Philosophy" was one of the first to distinguish Wittgenstein from the purely "discourse-orientated" Oxford ordinary-language philosophy: "[As against Wittgenstein] they believed that the job of philosophy was to set out the logical properties and relations of the various forms of discourse in a systematic way." A Quinton "Contemporary British Philosophy", in O'Connor (ed), *Critical History of Western Philosophy*, 546. Toulmin's recollection of Wittgenstein the philosopher in action makes for at least anecdotal evidence that Wittgenstein's later philosophy offered more than an explication of the correct uses of linguistic expressions over different domains of discourse; that in fact Wittgenstein was concerned with philosophical problems just as traditional philosophy was concerned with philosophical problems:

"The difference in priorities that divided Wittgenstein from so many of his fellow philosophers in Britain after 1945 is well captured in a remark by the Oxford

To be sure, Wittgenstein's philosophical method is descriptive: "Philosophy really is purely descriptive."⁸ Again: "Our method is purely descriptive; the descriptions we give are not hints of explanations."⁹ Yet the purpose of such description is no less than the dissolution of a philosophical problem:

And we may not advance any kind of theory. There must be nothing hypothetical in our consideration. We must do away with all explanation and description alone must take its place. And this description gets its light, that is to say, its purpose, from the philosophical problem.¹⁰

Elsewhere, Wittgenstein writes that philosophy consists of philosophical problems.¹¹

Yet it is plainly false to say that Phillips, for example, completely neglects what Wittgenstein has to say on philosophy as philosophical problem-solving. For Phillips the later philosophy is a mirror in which the traditional philosopher can observe how he has: ridden rough-shod over the rationality inherent to forms of life or language-games; operated with inappropriate (ontological or epistemological) criteria. On his account Wittgenstein holds up a mirror of perspicuous representations in which the traditional philosopher can see his assertions for the

analyst, J L Austin. In the course of rebutting objections to the supposed triviality of his own laborious explorations of linguistic usage, Austin replied that he had never been convinced that the question, whether a philosophical question was an important question, was itself an important question. Like any pure scientist, the professional philosopher should begin by tackling problems that were technically "sweet" and ripe for solution, whatever their extrinsic importance or unimportance. Pure philosophy must have priority; there would be time enough to apply its results to practical problems later. So, to go from Wittgenstein's Cambridge to the linguistic analysts of Oxford at the end of the nineteen forties was to feel that philosophy had somehow or another lost its mainspring. Anyone who listened to Wittgenstein in person was conscious of a deeply philosophical thinker struggling to clear away intellectual obstacles to the free movement of their mind. At Oxford, meanwhile, similar looking techniques were being employed with the greatest skill but without any deeper or clearly philosophical purpose. it was like exchanging a real clock for a child's clock-face - which looks just the same at first sight but does not tell time." A Janik and S Toulmin, *Vienna*, 259.

⁸ Wittgenstein, *BB*, 18.

⁹ *Ibid*, 125.

¹⁰ Wittgenstein, *PI* § 109.

¹¹ Wittgenstein, *PG*, § 193.

distortions they are. This is the route by which the later philosophy solves (or dissolves) philosophical problems.

Since on Phillips' account Wittgenstein requires the traditional philosopher to *understand* language-games and forms of life, Phillips promotes a version of the later philosophy as *partially* commensurate and partially incommensurate.¹² Rorty's version of Wittgenstein champions *complete* incommensurability,¹³ where commensurability is defined as follows:

By "commensurability" I mean able to be brought under a set of rules which will tell us how rational agreement can be reached on what would settle the issue on every point where statements seem to conflict.¹⁴

According to Rorty Wittgenstein severs all attachment with the notion of "rational agreement" in the sense that all his arguments can be construed as an attempt to undermine the very idea that philosophers can find common ground on which to settle philosophical issues. To be sure, Rorty's holism appears suitably Wittgensteinian in that it "licences everyone to construct his own little whole - his own paradigm, his own little practice, his own little language-game - and then crawl into it."¹⁵ As Rorty has it, the later philosophy is testimony to the emergence of a post-philosophical (postmodernist) culture in which the problems of traditional

¹² Thus language-games "can indeed be described, but they cannot be informatively described to someone who is not a participant." Kenny, *Wittgenstein*, 228. N Malcolm in the course of asserting that the two main achievements of the *Investigations* are the refutation of essentialism and the new ideas grouped around the concept of a form of life, emphasises a third (in relation to the second): "It is the concept that words and sentences can be understood only in terms of the circumstances, the contexts, the life-surroundings, in which they are spoken. [...] We understand sentences out of context only in the sense that we are familiar with the various contexts in which it *would* fit. N Malcolm, *Wittgenstein: Nothing is Hidden* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986), 239-240. The traditional philosopher is no less privy to such information: it is what he has always known. Wittgenstein, *PI* § 127. Nevertheless, on Phillips' account, partial incommensurability enters into the picture too since it is not considered necessary to understand the traditional philosopher's 'language-game' on his and its own grounds.

¹³ To be sure, Rorty, like Phillips, limits the later philosophy to the view that "if we understand the rules of a language game we understand all that there is to understand about why moves in that language game are made." Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, 174. Yet, unlike Phillips, Rorty does not believe that Wittgenstein speaks to the traditional philosopher at all. In that sense the writings of Rorty's Wittgenstein are not aimed especially (if at all) at the traditional philosopher.

¹⁴ Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, 316.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 317.

philosophy no longer exercise our minds. Unlike Phillips' Wittgenstein, Rorty's Wittgenstein is simply not interested in them.

For Rorty traditional epistemology and commensurability are logically interdependent in the sense that one cannot have one without the other:

To construct an epistemology is to find the maximum amount of common ground with others. The assumption that an epistemology can be constructed is the assumption that such common ground exists.¹⁶

In contrast, Wittgensteinian incommensurability on Rorty's terms entails a thorough-going relativism: the Wittgensteinian philosopher does not necessarily understand the traditional philosopher and vice-versa.

Clearly, Bartley would not regard the later philosophy as rendered by Phillips' (far less Rorty's version) a genuine "problem-orientated" philosophy. To Bartley, the later philosophy remains exclusively "discourse-orientated", is incurably fideistic. The later philosophy not so much engages with traditional philosophy directly as indirectly; indeed it not so much confronts traditional philosophy as bypasses it, opting instead for a portfolio on all the various forms of life much as an anthropologist would, in the hope that the traditional philosopher will see (literally) the error of his ways.¹⁷

Yet *pace* Bartley's assertion that Wittgenstein's later philosophy is

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 316.

¹⁷ The view attributed to Wittgenstein by, among others, Phillips, namely that forms of life and accompanying language-games were autonomous, one from the other; that the aim of the later philosophy was to elucidate the informal logic and grammar of specifically identifiable linguistic activities goes a long way to explaining why the later philosophy was perceived to be exclusively "discourse-orientated", or in other words, only concerned with philosophical problems in Phillips' sense. (Thus was Wittgenstein's later philosophy said to by-pass traditional philosophy.) This interpretation while *prima facie* plausible, in reality renders Wittgenstein's later philosophy a disservice. It is of no material importance to Wittgenstein whether forms of life and language-games can be separated off one from the other. In the *Tractatus* factual discourse alone functioned as meaningful discourse. In the later philosophy factual discourse is only one of many kinds of use to which language can be put: giving orders and obeying them; describing the appearance of an object, or giving its measurements; constructing an object from a description (a drawing); asking, thanking, cursing, greeting, praying. Wittgenstein *PI* § 23. The purpose of listing the multiplicity of language games at *PI* § 23 is to draw our attention to the difference between Wittgenstein's earlier and later self. In that same passage he goes on:

"It is interesting to compare the multiplicity of the tools in language and of the ways in which they are used, the multiplicity of kinds of words and sentence, with what logicians have said about the structure of language (including the author of the *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*)." Wittgenstein, *PI* § 23.

discourse-orientated (like linguistic philosophy) and therefore not problem-orientated (like Popperian philosophy),¹⁸ the later philosophy was passionately involved in philosophical problems *as they presented themselves to the traditional philosopher - from the perspective of the traditional philosopher*. In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein might be said to win an easy bloodless victory over philosophy. Reading as it does like a series of oracular pronouncements, the *Tractatus* can appear to have guaranteed the truth of its statements in the very saying of them, rather than engaging with the philosophical opposition, as it were, and defeating it at close quarters on the grounds of standard canons of philosophical enquiry. As an example, one can cite the fact that Wittgenstein damns most (if not all!) traditional philosophy in the following statement without reference to even one philosophical work:

Most of the propositions and questions to be found in philosophical works are not false but nonsensical. Consequently we cannot give an answer to questions of this kind but can only point out they are nonsensical.

Most of the propositions and questions of philosophy arise from a failure to understand the logic of our language.

(They belong to the same class as the question whether the good is more or less identical than the beautiful.)

And it is not surprising that the deepest problems are in fact *not* problems at all.¹⁹

The charge that the *Tractatus* claims a victory which is never fought for is of course a simplification. Wittgenstein does indeed fight a battle and he gives a clue in *TLP* 4.003 where it has been fought, and, he thinks, won: philosophical problems are the result of a failure to understand the logic of our language. This diagnosis is a fundamental theme of the *Tractatus* and Wittgenstein accordingly underlined its importance in the preface.²⁰ But still it remains true that it is a battle fought from afar without engaging the enemy. To be sure, Wittgenstein does have an answer for the classical modern philosophical tradition from Descartes through

¹⁸ In his otherwise fine essay "Philosophy and the Mirror of Rorty", P. Munz appears to presume that the choice between "discourse-orientated" and "problem-orientated" philosophy is a mutually exclusive and exhaustive one. He rejects Rorty's Wittgenstein and traditional justificationism, which, to his mind, leaves only Popper's philosophy of criticism. P. Munz, "Philosophy and the Mirror of Rorty", in Radnitzky and Bartley III (ed), *Evolutionary Epistemology, Rationality, and the Sociology of Knowledge* (La Salle, Illinois, Open Court, 1987), 361.

¹⁹ Wittgenstein, *TLP* 4.003.

²⁰ *Ibid*, iii.

to Kant but it is the same all-embracing answer of *TLP* 4.003: Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Kant have all misunderstood the logic of language. Consequently whatever differences existed among these philosophers were ignored on the grounds that what is important comes out in the wash (philosophical error or nonsense) when traditional philosophy is transposed on to another plane of domain of discourse - logical structure. (The universal scope of the *Tractatus* followed from its assumption that the existence of *any* language at all presupposed of necessity a common logical structure.)²¹

It is the genius of Wittgenstein's later philosophy that - without repudiating one whit the mortal blow he thought the *Tractatus* had delivered to cultural (especially philosophical and literary) subjectivism - it expanded the insights of the earlier philosophy, especially the showing and saying distinction, into the domain of discourse of the classical modern philosophical tradition and engaged it (as the *Tractatus* had not) on that tradition's own grounds, speaking the tradition's language, now using it, now mentioning it, all the time, manoeuvring to render it harmless. Thus Wittgenstein writes:

Philosophy is a tool which is useful only against philosophers and the philosopher in us.²²

In other words, contrary to Phillips and Rorty, far from turning his back on the traditional philosopher, Wittgenstein engages the traditional philosopher on the traditional philosopher's own grounds. Indeed, he steps into the traditional philosopher's shoes; in a certain sense he *becomes* the traditional philosopher; in a certain sense he *is* the traditional philosopher. Thus in philosophy (as in architecture)

The job to be done is ... really a job on oneself.²³

In other words, Wittgenstein takes up his place alongside the traditional philosopher as if he too were such a philosopher. The later philosophy operates from the vantage-point of the external perspective but with this essential difference: in

²¹ *Ibid*, 4.002.

²² Quoted in Kenny "Wittgenstein on the Nature of Philosophy", in McGuinness (ed), *Wittgenstein and His Times* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1981), 13.

²³ *Ibid*, 14.

order to undermine the very ground on which both he *qua* traditional philosopher and the traditional philosopher stand.²⁴ Wittgenstein talks to the traditional philosopher on the external perspective on the traditional philosopher's own grounds. Given this it must follow that the traditional philosopher, if he is to be persuaded to relinquish the plane of the external perspective, must be satisfied that the grounds for his relinquishment are convincing on his own grounds; that is, they must constitute sufficient conditions and moreover *sufficient conditions according to his own criteria for what are sufficient conditions for relinquishing that plane*. That is what it means to "do a job on the philosopher in us." Otherwise, the traditional philosopher would remain on his plane unmoved and unconvinced that he had any reason to relinquish his position. Wittgenstein sees through the traditional philosopher's eyes in order that the traditional philosopher ultimately sees through his. There is and must be a meeting of minds where bi-directional mutual understanding takes place.

In that sense there *is* complete commensurability - there is rational agreement - though not such that entails epistemology as traditionally conceived. Thus *pace* Rorty, that common ground exists is not equivalent to the assumption that an epistemology can be constructed. Though traditional epistemology entails complete commensurability, complete commensurability does not entail traditional epistemology.

Not only is Wittgenstein's language commensurable to the traditional philosopher's, *pace* Phillips, the traditional philosopher's language is commensurable to Wittgenstein's. The traditional philosopher understands Wittgenstein and Wittgenstein understands the traditional philosopher.²⁵

²⁴ That Wittgenstein's later philosophy can be evaluated according to the canons of traditional philosophical enquiry, that the traditional philosopher is to be "cured" of his illusions as to philosophy's aims (e.g., that philosophical propositions are either true or false), does not mean, as Lear thinks, that Wittgenstein needs, but cannot find, an independent basis for the language of philosophy. J Lear, "The Disappearing 'We'", *The Aristotelian Society Suppl* vol 58 (1984), 238-239. The philosopher in us has to be cured and this means it is his canons of rational enquiry that have to be satisfied.

²⁵ "My aim is: to teach you to pass from a piece of disguised nonsense to something that is patent nonsense." Wittgenstein, *PI* § 464. Elsewhere, he will put the matter more metaphorically: "What is your aim in philosophy: to show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle." *PI* § 114. R Conant

II. Excursus: D Z Phillips' Controversy with Anthony Kenny.

According to D Z Phillips, for Wittgenstein religious practices and religion are self-authenticating, that is to say, authenticated without reference to any kind of external perspective, any kind of universal canon conferring rationality on one kind of practice while refusing in the case of another: "He refuses to look for philosophical foundations and justifications for religious belief. Here, too, the task of philosophy is descriptive."²⁶

On the basis of this conclusion Phillips took issue with the statement issued by Anthony Kenny that Wittgenstein's philosophy of religion has had a disastrous impact on a generation of philosophers of religion.²⁷ Kenny elaborated on this charge later:

Some theologians regard religion as a way of life which can only be understood by participation and therefore cannot be justified to an outsider on neutral rational grounds. Such people must consider any attempt at a philosophical proof of God's existence to be wrong-headed and must find it inconceivable that such matters as whether everything in motion has a mover could have relevance to religion To me it seems that if belief in the existence of God cannot be rationally justified there

writes that Rorty's reading of Wittgenstein commits him to the view "that one should leave the fly in the fly-bottle and get on with something more interesting. On Rorty's reading of Wittgenstein, the enlightened philosopher should simply dismiss the traditional problems and leave them to those who are simply less enlightened." R Conant, "Introduction", lii. Common to *PI* § 464 and § 114 is the implication of *continuity*. In *PI* § 464 one is to *pass* [*übergehen*] from covert nonsense to over nonsense; one does not make a quantum jump; (the path of the fly likewise is a continuous and not a discrete trajectory!). Again, at *PI* § 119 Wittgenstein writes:

"The results of philosophy are the uncovering of one or another piece of plain nonsense and of bumps that the understanding has got by running its head up against the limits of language. These bumps make us see the value of the discovery." Wittgenstein *PI* § 119.

Here Wittgenstein refers to *his* way of doing philosophy (as in § 118 and § 120, § 122-8, § 133, etc.). Traditional philosophy generates nonsense and the job of the later philosophy is to expose it - but by finding out what it is like to speak as a traditional philosopher who has run up against the limits of language. Thus it is Wittgenstein and not the traditional philosopher or rather Wittgenstein *qua* traditional philosopher who suffers the bumps.

²⁶ Phillips, *Belief, Change and Forms of Life*, 3. Wittgenstein's reflections on religious statements, beliefs and utterances derive for the most part from the lecture notes of students who attended a course Wittgenstein gave on beliefs around 1938. They were posthumously published under the title *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics and Religion*. Thus that these remarks constitute Wittgenstein's philosophy of religion is not of course Wittgenstein's own judgement; it is a judgement made by subsequent commentators. Elsewhere, for example, in *Philosophical Investigations* and *Culture and Value* one finds only sporadic references to religious belief.

²⁷ Kenny, *Times Literary Supplement* 1975, 7 Feb.

can be no good grounds for adopting any of the traditional monotheistic religions.²⁸

To Phillips such a statement was all the more perplexing since Kenny was (and is) an admirer of Wittgenstein's method of philosophy. Accordingly, he seeks to show that Kenny is contradicting some of his earlier statements on Wittgenstein.²⁹ In particular he cites the following statement from Kenny's book *Wittgenstein*:

In saying that in philosophy there are no deductions Wittgenstein set himself against the type of philosophy which offers proofs, e.g., of the existence of God or immortality of the soul. Throughout his life he remained sceptical and hostile to philosophy of that kind.³⁰

But *is* Kenny contradicting himself? Given he does he express some kind of solidarity with the aims of Wittgenstein's later philosophy, does such a solidarity contradict his demand that the existence of God be rationally justified? Phillips seems to think that the choice is a mutually exclusive and exhaustive one: one either chooses religious statements embedded in religious statements and forms of life or the philosopher's rational justification as formulated in, for example, the classical proofs of the existence of God. If Phillips' assumption is correct then Kenny is indeed guilty of contradiction.

But "neutral rational grounds" are precisely the grounds on which the later philosophy attempts to persuade the traditional philosopher to relinquish the plane of the external perspective. Though forms of life and language-games are "self-authenticating" in the sense of not being authenticated by some external perspective, they are the point of reference, the means by which the traditional philosopher can engage in rational criticism. Hence, while classical proofs for the existence of God would, if valid, be sufficient conditions for the rational acceptance of theism, they do not constitute necessary conditions. And it is precisely this distinction to which Kenny alludes in a passage which Phillips curiously omits in his critical discussion:

A philosophical proof of God's existence from the nature of the world would not be the only form such a rational justification might take: a man might, for instance,

²⁸ Kenny, *The Five Ways*, 4.

²⁹ Phillips, *Belief*, 3.

³⁰ Kenny, *Wittgenstein*, 229-230.

come to accept the existence of God through believing something in the world to be a revelation from God; just as we might come to believe in the existence of martians by convincing ourselves that we were intercepting messages from Mars. Whether such a conviction was rational would not depend, it seems to me, on whether there was an independent proof of the existence of the beings in question in each case. But a valid philosophical proof of God's existence would be a sufficient though not a necessary condition for the possibility of a rational acceptance of theism.³¹

In other words, for Kenny the choice between Wittgenstein's philosophy of religion and apologetic theology is not an exhaustive one. The reason the classical proofs are sufficient rather than necessary conditions is that one could accept as a rational justification any argument which, on the question of God's existence, persuaded the traditional philosopher to relinquish the external perspective. Hence, contrary to Phillips' claim, there is no contradiction at the heart of Kenny's view on Wittgenstein's philosophy of religion. His charge that Wittgenstein has been a disastrous influence on the philosophy of religion is simply based on the perception that nothing he has read of the followers of Wittgenstein in the philosophy of religion has persuaded him to relinquish the apologetic plane.

Thus, in conclusion, it would be consistent for Kenny to:

- (i) agree along with Wittgenstein that the task of philosophy is not to offer proofs of e.g., the existence of God;
- (ii) hold that *philosophical* justification must be on neutral rational grounds;
- (iii) hold that Wittgenstein's philosophy of religion does not satisfy (ii).

It therefore follows that, contrary to Phillips' claim in the essay "Religion in Wittgenstein's Mirror", his argument in *Belief, Change and Forms of Life* is unsuccessful in challenging Kenny's accusation that "the years since the second world war have been a sorry time for the philosophy of religion in the English-speaking countries due not least to the disastrous influence of Wittgenstein." Note the emphasis is on Wittgenstein's *influence*, not necessarily the later philosophy itself.

³¹ Kenny, *The Five Ways*, 4-5.

III. Complete Commensurability Without Apologetics: Barth's Theology Leaves Everything As It Is - Except the Traditional Philosopher.

That Barth is not in the least apologetic does not condemn him to fideism. The logic in "The Aim of Theology", the final section of Part I of *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, parallels that of Wittgenstein's aim in philosophy. To be sure, Barth's theology too 'leaves everything as it is'. But it does not then follow there is no room for rational criticism *anywhere at all* in his theology. For it does not then follow that the traditional philosopher cannot be persuaded of the *rationality* of relinquishing the plane of the external perspective, that is, on grounds acceptable to him *as traditional philosopher*, which is to say, on the basis of *his own* criteria for what it is that constitute grounds. The charge of fideism cannot be sustained, not because Barth does not leave everything as it is but because, as in Wittgenstein, the traditional philosopher can evaluate, judge, and therefore criticise whether he has grounds for relinquishing his perspective.

It is clear that Barth's interpretation of Anselm's theological scheme and *Proslogion* 2-4 departs from the traditional interpretation. Indeed, the originality of his interpretation resides in its rejection of a tradition of interpretation dominant at least since St Thomas Aquinas:

Thomas Aquinas and Kant were at one in their misunderstanding and denial of that very aspect of Anselm's theology which is to be our special concern here.³²

And, remarking on the problem of interpretation which Anselm's Proof has raised, he wrote:

Its interpretation, traditional since Gaunilo and all but canonised through Thomas Aquinas and still influential even in our own day, always struck me as being a kind of intellectual insolence concealing or distorting everything vital.³³

Finally, the closing passage of *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* issues like a challenge to traditional philosophical commentary on the Anselmian argument:

That Anselm's proof of the existence of God has repeatedly been called the "ontological" proof of God, that commentators have refused to see that it is in a different book altogether from the well-known teaching of Descartes and Leibniz,

³² Barth, *FQI*, 8.

³³ *Ibid*, 8.

that anyone could seriously think that it is even remotely affected by what Kant put forward against these doctrines - all that is so much nonsense on which no more words ought to be wasted.³⁴

Yet in one very important respect his interpretation coincides with that same tradition. Though the aim of theology is not to supply one more apologetic proof on the plane of the external perspective, which is to say, it is not to measure itself against the principle of proof, Barth wants to proceed "without first having accepted the truth of revelation":

... he is able to promise him instruction on how he could convince himself, given a certain amount of intelligence, of the reasonableness of the Christian faith without having first accepted the truth of the revelation.³⁵

This is an extremely important qualification, one that upsets the traditional fideistic interpretation of Barth. For such openness is also the way of the classical modern approach, though obviously in the latter's case it cannot be a sufficient, though it is a necessary, condition. The question to be asked is: how can Barth

- (i) not first accept the truth of revelation,
- (ii) not derive the truth of revelation (apologetically),³⁶

³⁴ *Ibid*, 171. It is clear that Barth did not understand Anselm's Proof in this way in the *Göttingen Dogmatics*. For although he refers to Anselm's dictum "I believe in order to understand" as it is in *Pros. 1*, (Barth, *The Göttingen Dogmatics*, 348), it is a principle he applies to *all* the classical proofs (i.e., including Anselm's) to bring out the sense in which such proofs would have a part to play in the theological scheme delineated in the *Göttingen Dogmatics*. In this scheme it is subject (as are all the proofs) to Kant's critique. *Ibid*, 350. In *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* Anselm's Proof is now withdrawn from the class of proofs subject to Kant's critique. Barth, *FQI*, 171. Thus McCormack is wrong to say that in the *Göttingen Dogmatics* Barth argues in a way "quite similar to the way in which he would defend Anselm's ontological 'proof' for God's existence". McCormack "Scholastic", 583.

³⁵ Barth, *FQI*, 68.

³⁶ There have been two main *apologetic* reactions to the canon of rational philosophical enquiry elucidated in chapter 5. First there are those - mainly philosophers of religion - who, rejecting Kant's critique of the classical proofs of the existence of God, wholeheartedly accept both the symmetrical representational principle of truth and the principle of proof and explicitly or implicitly endorse them in their work. R Swinburne is perhaps the leader of this group (at least in the Anglo-Saxon world). He rejects Kant's critique, R Swinburne, *The Existence of God* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1979), 2. See also Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, revised edition, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993); Swinburne, *Faith and Reason* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1981); Kenny, *The God of the Philosophers* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1979). K Ward, *The Concept of God* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1974); *Theology and the Creativity of God* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1982); J Hick, *Arguments for the Existence of God* (London, Macmillan, 1970). Second, Reformed epistemologists have exploited the logical fact that whereas adhering to the second principle entails adhering to the first, adhering to the first does not entail adhering to the second. Accordingly, such philosophers have

and

(iii) still be said to be rational rather than fideistic i.e., successfully repudiate the charge of fideism?

Barth himself recognised the paradox, calling it an "enigma".³⁷ How - in the context of *Credo ut intelligam* - could Anselm assert that his theological discussion would succeed in convincing the unbeliever given that the question of revelation and faith was always (at all times in the conversation) left open? All non-apologetic arguments if successful were necessarily fideist: the 'unbelievers' could not but be believers; and in effect, there is no such thing as a 'valid' non-apologetic argument based on "uncommitted understanding":

Is [Anselm] ... deceiving himself when he thinks that his 'proofs' could ever be understood by the unbelievers, by those who *quaerunt, quia non credunt*, and when he thinks that not only is theological discussion possible with them, but that it should succeed - the question of revelation and faith always left open - in convincing them of the reasonableness of the *Credo*? What kind of believers could he have had in mind who allow themselves to be transposed in this way *nolens volens* into the realm of theology [*den Raum der Theologie*]? And was it not the case that his own *credo ut intelligam* was the best argument against the possibility of such uncommitted understanding, against the possibility of a *theologia irrogenitorum*, a theological non-Christian impartiality. And even at its best could the outcome of such an instruction be anything but useless information about the inner consistency of Christian statements which would be completely incapable of preventing the person so informed from doubting, denying and despising the whole thing as much as ever and, with the whole thing, the details too? In what sense could this result, which it is highly improbable would be otherwise, be worth the trouble expended on it? Is it not true right from the start the whole attempt to prove was a false and reprehensible notion and would Anselm not have done better and remain truer to his own purposes had he given his theology the clear character of an esoteric science?³⁸

How does Barth reconcile this apparent inconsistency between, on the one

argued that one can retain the rational external perspective if the proposition under scrutiny is a foundational proposition not itself in need of proof or justification. In effect, they accept the symmetrical principle of truth but see no need for the principle of proof when it comes to the question of the existence of God. A Plantinga, "Is Belief in God Rational?", in C F Delaney (ed), *Rationality and Religious Belief* (London, University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), 7-27; A Plantinga, "Reformed Epistemology Again", *The Reformed Journal* vol 32 issue 7, 3-14; A Plantinga, "Reason and Belief in God", in A Plantinga and N Wolterstorff (ed), *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 16-93.

³⁷ Barth, *FQI*, 69.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 69-70. It is noteworthy that Barth himself uses the phrase *the realm of theology* [*den raum der Theologie*] in the above passage.

hand, "uncommitted understanding" and, on the other, the implication of *credo ut intelligam* construed in terms of the theme of the priority of actuality over possibility? *Prima facie*, this latter theme would appear to contradict the hypotheticality integral to "uncommitted understanding". Barth's interpretation of Anselm's proof is a reworking of the theme of the priority of actuality over possibility so radical that not only does it rule out contingent falsehood, it also rules out hypotheticality - at both internal and external stand-points, at all stand-points. Barth construes the Reformed doctrine of grace as an epistemic priority of revelation - of prototypical revelation - so extreme that the assertion of God's existence outside the context of revelation makes no sense because it makes no sense inside the context of revelation (grace). Given God is "that than which no greater can be thought" is not an *a priori* conception (*une définition purement conceptuelle*)³⁹ but the content of revelation itself, Anselm's proof is not that though such an existence-statement makes no sense outside the context of revelation it makes sense inside; or that it is because it makes sense in such a way inside the context of revelation that it makes no sense outside; rather it makes no sense outside the context of revelation because it makes no sense inside, or, to put the same point differently, it is because it makes no sense inside the context of revelation that it makes no sense outside. It is precisely because the proof rules out hypotheticality at both internal and external stand-points, at all stand-points, that Barth is able to consider the argument as if it were rendered from a hypothetical stand-point. For if hypotheticality is impossible outside only, then speaking hypothetically is undermined outside only; but if hypotheticality is false both outside and inside then speaking hypothetically is undermined not only outside but also inside. Barth does not claim an advantage on behalf of the believers inside. This is the sense in which there is theological neutrality.⁴⁰

What Barth claims on behalf of Anselm is that:

if revelation is as Anselm says it is then it is not possible to say

³⁹ Barth *FQI*, 75.

⁴⁰ See below, 190-192.

(inside or outside) "if revelation is as Anselm says it is then"

That is to say, one's own realist existence-statements in the realm of faith described in terms of its object are dialectically undermined (inside and therefore outside). Because truth cannot be said it can only be shown - and this follows from logic itself.⁴¹ The realist gap is eliminated.⁴² The truth of revelation criticises - refutes - all other vantage-points (the plane of the external perspective) from which it could conceivably be criticised. This is why at *Pros.* 4 Barth asserts that the fool's statement "God does not exist" is due to the fact he is standing on another plane, one which from the plane of the theological realm is logically demonstrated not to exist. That is the real reason why to stand on it is *folly* [*die Torheit*]:

The assertion and the denial of the Existence of God do not take place - here we have the fundamental solution to the problem - on the same plane [*auf derselben Ebene*] at all. The fool is able to say what he is certainly unable to conceive in so far as when he says it he is standing on a plane where he can assert the non-existence of God. And he is unable to conceive of what he is nevertheless able to say in so far as he is standing on another plane where it would be impossible for him to assert the non-existence of God. This is the fool's basic folly that in his thinking he is standing on a plane where the assertion of God's non-existence is certainly possible but where to stand on that plane is in itself - folly.⁴³

⁴¹ Barth's response to realism is logically continuous with his response to historicism (historicism has imposed an alien form on *sui generis* theological truth). To be sure, as was pointed out at the end of chapter 4 realism does not have to be historicist realism: it does not necessarily ask whether *sui generis* theological truth exists in historical mode (a logically inappropriate question). What it can purport to ask is whether *sui generis* truth exists at all (as itself). But while Barth is ultimately more sympathetic to realism than to historicism his response in short is that realism attempts to say what can only be shown, and this itself can be shown according to the canons of ordinary reason. Barth leads us from realism to a first-order concept of (ordinary) truth.

⁴² D Papineau defines realism in terms of the negation of anti-realism: "Anti-realism is the thesis that the analysis of representation yields an *a priori* argument that at some level judgement and reality must fit each other. Realism is the denial of this thesis." D Papineau, *Reality and Representation* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1987), xii. To be sure, Barth would reject the denial of this thesis insofar as it seeks to maintain a gap between statement and fact. Yet it would be misleading to place Barth in the camp of the anti-realists since he rejects the idea that *a priori* argument has a place in theology. Moreover, *pace* Robert's thesis, it is not idealism that Barth juxtaposes to realism but *sui generis* truth. Roberts, "The Ideal and the Real in the Theology of Karl Barth" in S Sykes and D Holmes (ed), *New Studies in Theology 1* (London, Duckworth, 1980), 163-180. It would also be a mistake to put Wittgenstein in with the anti-realists: "... the suggestion that Wittgenstein was, in his later writings, propounding a form of anti-realism is ... fatal It distorts his conception of meaning and understanding and grossly misinterprets his philosophy of mind. Of course, it does not follow that he was defending a form of realism either. In order to see matters aright we must jettison this unfortunate pair of pigeon-holes altogether." Hacker, *Insight*, 323.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 163.

It is not merely that the fool believes "God exists" is false, it is that the grounds from which his assertion is made (rather than merely the grounds of his assertion) cannot exist if revelation is true - though this hypothetical itself is undermined by the truth to which it purports to correspond.

IV. "The inward proof is also the outward proof."

The above explains why all through the section "The Aim of Theology" Barth insists that Anselm's proof is a species of completely commensurate non-apologetic. It may have seemed that Barth was guilty of a logical sleight-of-hand which could not but avoid begging the question. Yet according to Barth's interpretation, Anselm's strategy is to leave no 'logical space' for anything except the revelation whose truth dialectically - and logically - undermines any (transcendental) condition of its own assertion ('the hypothetical itself is undermined by the truth to which it purports to correspond'). That is, it undermines realism - which in this context means that it undermines the information-content normally associated with the statement "God exists".⁴⁴ For Barth the crucial parameter of Anselm's argument is revelation whose content is analytic yet *a posteriori*. This content is mediated by what Barth means by *mitaufgenommene*, a term first met in chapter 5 and whose implication will be worked out in chapter 7. By this means Barth attempts to collapse the whole apologetic plane (the traditional philosopher's 'logical space'). That is how he intends his argument to work. What this means in practice is, will be a matter for chapter 7. Insofar as it is Barth's affirmation of the analytic dimension that repudiates realism, Barth remains not entirely out of line with what is expressed by the *a priori* aspect of the traditional ontological interpretation attributed to Anselm by the classical modern philosophers. The difference is (a) the absence of apologetic, and therefore (b) God is "that than which no greater can be thought" is not an *a priori* conception but the content of revelation

⁴⁴ It is to be noted that Papineau's definition of realism in #42 identifies the realist gap as the essential feature of all realisms. Since all realisms, whether naive, representational, etc., entail the "realist gap" (the realist gap is a necessary condition), they must be rejected if the realist gap is rejected. Whether 'naivety' are the predicates of some other thesis is not the issue here. Realism 'in the abstract' is.

itself (and hence *a posteriori*).

If this much is true then Barth can be said to offer us a fully commensurate yet non-apologetic argument. Some definitions are in order at this point:

1. If Anselm (A) talks to the traditional philosopher (TP) on TP's terms but TP does not talk to A on A's terms then fully commensurate apologetic is the result.

2. If TP talks to the A on A's terms but A does not talk to TP on TP's terms then partially incommensurate fideism is the result.⁴⁵

3. If A talks to TP on TP's terms and TP talks to A on A's terms then fully commensurate non-apologetic (non-fideism) is the result.

4. If A doesn't talk to TP on TP's terms and TP doesn't talk to A on A's terms then fully incommensurate fideism is the result.⁴⁶

Barth claims 3. on Anselm's behalf ((obviously not 1. but not 2. or 4. either). That is, Barth's Anselm is an eleventh-century monk some nine centuries ahead of his time who anticipates and resolves a quintessentially twentieth century debate⁴⁷ between hermeneutics and epistemology; and he does this without succumbing to fideism.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ This view can be attributed to Torrance. But Barth rejects the view that what he is doing is simply holding up a mirror of the *sui generis* rationality (in Torrance's terms, *rational structure*) against which the traditional philosopher (as traditional philosopher) can perceive the extent of the mismatch between his rationality and *sui generis* theological rationality. Thus Barth repudiates the more enlightened interpretation held by the 'Phillipsian' theologians. As has been seen, they interpret Barth's theology as a partially incommensurate theology in which the traditional philosopher understands the first- and second-order discourses of the Barthian theologian but not vice-versa. It is fully commensurate in the sense that it explicitly acknowledges the traditional philosopher's own conditions for relinquishing the plane of the external perspective.

⁴⁶ Cupitt's interpretation of Barth is an example of this thesis. If *Fides quaerens intellectum* does not mean that one first accepts the truth of revelation then Cupitt's confinement of his conception of this dictum to a mode of talk that is intelligible internally only cannot be right. To be sure, *fides quaerens intellectum* is intelligible at the interface of the theological realm but it does not follow that it is not also intelligible to the traditional philosopher (which at the very least guarantees the validity of partially incommensurate fideism).

⁴⁷ The question whether Barth's interpretation of Anselm is historically accurate is a different question from the question whether the interpretation of *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* being offered here is valid. It is the latter that is of interest to us.

⁴⁸ Though meticulous in his analysis of the section "The Path of Theology", Torrance has little to say on the section "The Aim of Theology" or how it integrates with "The Path of Theology". *Karl Barth: An Introduction to His Theology 1909-1931* says nothing at all about the significance of Anselm and the unbeliever engaging in conversation. The few references that there are to the "The

The first impression that Barth's Anselm really does talk to the traditional philosopher on the latter's own grounds comes in the following passage:

[Anselm] ... stands over against the heathen, Jew or heretic to whom the Proof is addressed. There is no question but that this other person who rejects the Christian revelation and therefore Anselm's presupposition, is really before Anselm's mind as he writes and that he is speaking in opposition to him, addressing him, wishing to say something to him or at least wishing to reduce him to silence.⁴⁹

But how does he speak to him? Certainly not in the apologetic vein:

Certainly not one of Anselm's writings appeals to us as being addressed directly to those outside, that is, as "apologetic" in the modern sense. The readers whom he visualises and for whom he caters are the Christian theologians, or more exactly, the Benedictine theologians of his day. Anselm's theology is therefore no esoteric wisdom; it develops - we will have to say 'usually' - as the rendering of an account against *omni poscenti se rationem de ea quae in nobis est spe*. It is the denial that more or less assumes the role of partner in the discussion. But that is not to say that he felt compelled to take up his position on his opponent's grounds. He could not do that and he did not do it.⁵⁰

It is necessary to tread carefully in interpreting this passage. When Barth says of Anselm that he did not "take up his position on his opponent's grounds" what he means is that he does not address his opponent *apologetically*. In other words, Anselm's denial of his opponent's position remains one that assumes the role of

Aim of Theology" refer only to the "illuminating" qualities of Anselm's Proof without saying who they illuminate or how they illuminate. *Ibid*, 186. Karl Barth, *Biblical and Evangelical Theologian* is relatively more informative in this respect:

"In the course of [the task of theology] there emerges, as St. Anselm rightly claimed, the properly grounded proof of theological knowledge, which is certainly compelling for those who have entered into an empirical relation to God through faith, but which ought to command rational respect even for unbelievers for the validity and force of its rational structure." Torrance, *Biblical*, 150.

This certainly qualifies as an interpretation of "The Aim of Theology" but it is so general as to be consistent with a range of more detailed exegesis, not all of which would be equally valid. McCormack's interpretation of *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* is flawed by the absence of reference to what is going on in "The Aim of Theology (the proof)". For he sees little difference between the theological method practised in *Göttingen Dogmatics* and that practised in *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*. McCormack, "Scholastic", 507. He cites and examines various propositions believed to derive the proposition that *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* says something "decisively new". To be sure, none of the positions he examines do derive the conclusion that what *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* has to say hasn't been said at an earlier stage in Barth's theological development. *Ibid*, 530-544. However, it does not then follow that *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* says nothing decisively new. In other words, one can agree with everything McCormack says about each position but not derive the conclusion he derives, namely that there is nothing decisively new in Anselm. In professing complete commensurability "The Aim of Theology" does say something new.

⁴⁹ Barth, *FQI*, 62.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 62-63.

partner in the discussion.

Barth makes the subtle but nonetheless real distinction between, on the one hand, talking to his opponent on his opponent's apologetic grounds simultaneously assuming the role of partner with him, and, on the other, talking to his opponent non-apologetically but still on the latter's own grounds, still assuming the role of partner with him. Can Barth really make this distinction? Won't disregarding apologetic *ipso facto* mean a theology limited to an inner sanctum of faith completely powerless to reach out to the plane of the external perspective of the traditional philosopher? Barth himself is aware of such an objection: he acknowledges the apparent possibility that the "partner in discussion" is not a real partner in the discussion at all; that in reality neither can interpret the other to each's satisfaction, which is to say, neither has a hermeneutic appropriate to the other's needs. He writes:

The inexplicable possibility exists that the partner in discussion is and remains an *insipiens*, in which case all discussion with him is pointless and meaningless. [...] And so *insipienter quaerere* and *sapienter respondere* are marching along side by side but really have nothing in common and once that is recognised they might as well save themselves all the trouble and the excitement.⁵¹

Here Barth's Anselm confronts precisely the modern *hermeneutical* problem found in Rorty. Against Cupitt's (and Hebblethwaite's) interpretation of internal commensuration and external incommensuration, Barth's Anselm proposes complete commensuration (encompassing partial commensuration), coinciding with rational agreement *on the traditional philosopher's own terms*. Indeed, Barth goes on in the next paragraph to write that Anselm explicitly denies that internal and external are mutually exclusive ontological categories, and apologetic and fideism mutually exclusive and exhaustive epistemological categories:

But now we come to the exceedingly remarkable fact that Anselm did not reckon with the given-ness of that possibility. It has often been noted that Anselm's writings, whose purposes have been frequently compared to those of the Crusades, are on the other hand distinguished by an extraordinary mildness when it comes to polemics. This can and must be understood partly in terms of personal psychology. But this mildness plus the fact that apparently without the slightest inhibition, Anselm did embark on the attempt to provide proof in the face of unbelievers and false believers and despite the *Credo ut intelligam* and his predestinarian

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 65.

background, nevertheless requires some practical explanation.⁵²

Contrary to the belief that he is only intelligible to those alongside him, inside faith as it were, Anselm does not even reckon with the given-ness of that possibility. The reason Anselm does not stoop to polemic, his mild psychology notwithstanding, is that he assumes common ground with the traditional philosopher, though without committing himself to apologetic epistemology. Anselm embarks on the attempt to provide proof in the face of, and for, unbelievers. In that sense, Barth believes, Anselm's *Credo ut intelligam* or his predestinarianism (rational persuasion is superfluous since getting to the starting-point of faith is out of one's own hands) only predispose one to misinterpreting Anselm on this matter, leading one to believe that he puts less emphasis on rational persuasion than he actually does. Barth goes on:

In face of the unbeliever's rock of offence thus understood, the Christian theologian does not feel himself powerless. Thus understood, it is in fact the rock of offence by which he himself was driven and continues to be driven from *credere* to *intelligere*. Therefore all he has to do is to lead his opponent along his own path and thus be able to give him the answers to the questions that even he himself is asking.⁵³

Here Anselm stands beside the traditional philosopher on the plane of the external perspective. From that plane his task is, as he puts it, to "lead his opponent along his own path." Far from having nothing in common, they can in fact enter into conversation - reach rational agreement - with each other, without compromising their respective identities. Anselm sees things through the eyes of the traditional philosopher in order that the traditional philosopher sees through Anselm's eyes. In other words, there is no mutually exclusive and exhaustive choice between the apologetic plane of the external perspective or the fideistic plane of the internal perspective. Barth rejects the choice as a false dichotomy. To engage in conversation with the 'unbeliever' entails neither apologetic nor fideism. Moreover, that the unbeliever is asked to consider what will turn out to be the interface of Barth's theological realm does not entail that he suppress his identity as unbeliever:

Anselm assumes his own ground, the ground of strictly theological (we would

⁵² *Ibid*, 65-66.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 66.

nowadays say dogmatic), impartiality to be likewise a ground on which the 'unbeliever' could quite well discuss and would want to discuss. Thus he summons him on his own ground; or rather he addresses him as one who by his own questions has already accepted this ground and therefore he is able (without renouncing the *credo ut intelligam* or his predestinarian background) to discuss with him as if he were a Boso or a Gaunilo.⁵⁴

As if he were a Boso or a Gaunilo! As if Anselm were a traditional philosopher! Though Anselm summons the unbeliever to his side he does not expect him to renounce the external perspective; rather he asks him to bring it with him. Indeed, all through the conversation Anselm has the unbeliever's perspective before him as if he too were an unbeliever. In that sense the two planes coalesce. In that sense "the inward proof is also the outward proof":

Did Anselm really so interpret the unbeliever's quest? Again this must be settled one way or another on an examination of the actual content of Anselm's writings. On that basis we must certainly say 'Yes. Anselm has so interpreted this quest.' We will not find any passage in Anselm where he worked out the 'proof', that is, the argument directed outwards with the unbeliever in view, as an action that is different from the searchings that take faith as starting-point or where another special 'apologetic' action would follow on the 'dogmatic' or where such action basing itself on or including the dogmatic norm would first come anagogically or apagogically. But even the working out of the *intelligere*, even the inward proof is also the outward proof. The unbeliever's quest is not simply taken up in any casual fashion and incorporated into the theological task but all the way through it is in fact treated as identical with the quest of the believer himself.⁵⁵

Far from the unbeliever's quest being appended on to Anselm's theological project as an after-thought, it is in fact always before Anselm as if it were his quest too. True, Anselm remains himself - but in a very real sense he is no less traditional philosopher. To be sure, the inward proof is the inward proof but that does not stop it being the outward proof too. Inward understanding - yes - but also outward understanding. And that means, moreover, that Anselm's concept of *ratio* is both an

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 67. In the footnote to this passage Barth writes: "That is why he [Anselm] can even appoint his fellow-believer Boso as representative of the 'unbeliever'." They are of course two sides to the same 'apologetic' coin.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 67. Barth recasts his hermeneutical point in terms of Anselm's contemporaries, the Crusaders:

"Perhaps, desiring to prove, he did not really remain standing on this side of the gulf between the believer and nonbeliever but crossed it, though on this occasion not in search of a truce as has been said of him and has often happened, but - here reminiscences of the days of the Crusaders could come to the fore - as conqueror whose weapon was the fact that he met the unbelievers as one of them and accepted them as his equal." *Ibid*, 71.

inward and an outward *ratio*:

Long before his 'unbelieving' partner in discussion ever appeared, Anselm most certainly intended to destroy the appearance of *repugnare* between *ratio* and *fides*. It was and remains quite impossible for Anselm to allow his faith to come to peaceable terms with lack of knowledge. What question of the unbeliever could be new to him and what answer could he give him save that which he had given himself? Anselm's Proof works on the assumption that there is a solidarity between the theologian and the worldling which has not come about because the theologian has become one of the crowd, or one voice in a universal debating chamber, but because he is determined to address the worldling as one with whom he has at least this in common - theology.⁵⁶

Barth turns to his original distinction. Anselm talks to the unbeliever - the "worldling" - on the latter's own grounds, not as one voice in a universal debating chamber forwarding this or that proof in competition with rival hypotheses.

That Anselm's proof is intelligible both internally and externally is further corroborated by the assertion that, though not apologetic, it is no species of esoteric 'science':

Anselm's theology is simple. That is the plain secret of his 'proving'. Anselm is not in a position to treat Christian knowledge as an esoteric mystery, as a phenomenon that would have to shun the cold light of secular thinking. He credits his theology as such - without special adaptation for those outside - with being conclusive and convincing. He would have to distrust his theology and it would no longer be convincing even to himself and therefore it would be bad theology, if, for the benefit of those outside, he had to give precedence to special proofs over its own distinctive arguments.⁵⁷

Barth goes on:

And Anselm is in no position to serve himself with something other than that with which he himself is served. Not only because he quite honestly has nothing else to offer or because he knows no other proof than the one that convinces him, but also because he knows himself to be responsible to the world and dares not offer it anything else than the best. And for that reason Anselm knows just one question, one language and one task of theology. He does not undertake his task without the intention of 'proving', which means wishing to make the Faith comprehensible to everyone, not only to himself, not only to the little flock but to everyone. But he can only prove on the basis of strict theological neutrality, as if there were no rejection of the revelation.⁵⁸

Barth's Anselm's answer to the theorists of incommensurability is: one question, *one language*, one task of theology. In Barth's interpretation Anselm does

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 67-68.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 68.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 68-69.

not preach to the converted: Anselm as a true evangelical theologian looks beyond the little flock in order to take up the same ground as the unbeliever; Anselm does not speak one language and the unbeliever another, one unintelligible to the other; Anselm and the unbeliever speak one language and have the same objective in mind.

Thus Barth concludes:

If such is Anselm's interpretation of the quest of the 'unbeliever' then we can understand how he comes to engage in a discussion without either accepting the unbeliever's criterion, such as universal human reason, or stipulating that the unbeliever in order to become competent to discuss must first be converted into a believer.⁵⁹

V. "As if there was no rejection of the revelation."

But though Barth's interpretation coincides with apologetic with respect to "not first accepting the truth of the revelation it differs with respect to another parameter. Speaking of Anselm Barth claims that

But he can only prove on the basis of strict theological neutrality, as if there were no rejection of the revelation.⁶⁰

This is not part of the apologist's agenda, at least not necessarily. For if strict theological neutrality entails as if there were no rejection of the revelation then such neutrality cannot be confused with complete neutrality. An apologetic scheme does not require such neutrality; for it begins not with theological neutrality but complete neutrality. For though the apologetic scheme can work in the case of someone who proceeds "as if there were no rejection of revelation", it is not a necessary condition; that is, apologetic can work even in the case of the person who refuses to proceed on this assumption.

Thus like apologetic Barth's proof is completely commensurable to:

1. those who do not first accept the truth of revelation⁶¹

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 66-67.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 68-69.

⁶¹ Thus *pace* Charlesworth Barth's interpretation does not begin, or rather does not have to begin with the premise of faith. Charlesworth, *St. Anselm's Proslogion* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1965), 40-46.

2. those who reject revelation but who agree to proceed as if they did not.⁶²

But unlike apologetic it is not commensurable with:

3. those who reject revelation and refuse to proceed as if they did not, (i.e., the traditional philosopher who refuses to proceed as if he did not reject revelation).⁶³

Yet refusal to proceed as if one did not reject the revelation is logically equivalent to rejecting the meaningfulness (non-contradictoriness) of the revelation - to reject the sense of words like "God", "divinity", etc. as in the manner of logical positivism. For if that than which a greater cannot be thought is not *une définition purement conceptuelle* but rather the identity of revelation then it is impossible to understand the identity of revelation yet be true to one's intent to refuse to proceed as if one did not reject the revelation (the condition of theological neutrality); nevertheless one does not first have to accept the truth of the revelation. Where Charles Hartshorne's theistic interpretation concludes that "... though the Proof does not refute unbelief of the positivistic variety, it does force the unbeliever to take the radical ground of denying coherent meaning to the religious idea"⁶⁴ Barth's revelatory interpretation concludes:

What the *insipiens* can prove is this and only this, that he does not know him whose Existence he denies. And it is not his denial, but his not knowing, that

⁶² Thus contrary to Hopkins Barth would not necessarily disagree with the view that "as long as [he] Barth allows that Anselm is trying to prove the existence of God, there is no basis in Anselm for contrasting the believer's ability to recognise the soundness of a proof with the unbeliever's inability to recognise this. If the arguments of the *Proslogion* do not *prove* to the unbeliever, it is because they also do not prove to the believer - i.e., because they do not prove at all." Hopkins, *A Companion to the Study of St. Anselm* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1972), 59.

⁶³ As will be apparent in chapter 7, Wittgenstein's later philosophy utilises forms of life to repudiate realism. But in fact it is these very forms of life that the sceptic refuses to countenance. Therefore Wittgenstein's arguments only work in the case of the person who does not refuse to proceed as if the existence of forms of life is not rejected. Insofar as the sceptic refuses to proceed in such a manner he cannot be brought to acknowledge that his doubts are meaningless. Thus it could be said that Wittgenstein too requires more than just "not first accepting the existence of forms of life".

⁶⁴ C Hartshorne, *Anselm's Discovery. A Re-examination of the Ontological Proof For God's Existence* (La Salle, Illinois, Open Court, 1965), 54.

constitutes his folly.⁶⁵

It may be said that the apologist has his own presupposition which Barth's Anselm does not: namely, presupposing the realist gap. Yet it is difficult to escape the conclusion that Barth proceeds as if he did not reject the realist gap; yet proceeds in this manner in order to collapse the realist gap, showing us that 'outside the context of revelation' - the domain of the fool - had always been an impossible (non-existent) position. Does this mean that Barth's interpretation is less powerful than the apologetic interpretation? In the sense that the latter is commensurable with the person who rejects revelation and refuses to proceed as if he did not, then *ceteris paribus* such would be the case. But the *ceteris paribus* condition does not hold. The interpretations differ in the *kinds* of conclusion they derive. Apologetic proof seeks to establish something as true or false. Barth seeks to jettison - with respect to revelation - the fundamental realist presupposition behind all such conclusions. In terms of what it wants to prove, Barth's real quarry is not, as one might think, God; rather, his real quarry in *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* is the fundamental thought-form with which we seek to ascertain and master revelation. That this is so is the fundamental reason Barth does not derive "God necessarily (or contingently) exists." Thus one can conclude there is a logical trade-off between point of departure and conclusion: even though Barth's 'assumptions' are more powerful so then is his conclusion.

⁶⁵ Barth, *FQI*, 168. Barth does not make it entirely clear whether the fool does not know because he refuses to proceed as if there was no revelation or he does not know even when he has proceeded in such a manner. But more important to Barth is the following: from the vantage-point of revelation it is logically demonstrated that all the fool can do is derive he does not know God's revelation. Normally, by the logical rule of *modus tollens* we would derive from Anselm's central proposition (if revelation is as Anselm says it is the it is impossible to say "if revelation is as Anselm says it is":

if it is possible to say "if revelation is as Anselm says it is" then revelation is not as Anselm says it is.

This reads like a paradox but it is not; rather, if the hypothetical were logically permissible, then whatever revelation is, its identity is not as Anselm says it is; its identity lies elsewhere such that it is reachable and criticizable by realism. However, all is well for revelation is (necessarily identical with) that than which a greater cannot be thought. Hence the consequent of the above is impossible. Thus where for Hartshorne the fool must be committed to the belief that the idea is meaningless, for Barth the fool simply does not know God.

Concluding Remarks.

To interpret Anselm's proof revelatorily has always appeared to render any proof superfluous. This becomes even more noticeable in the case of prototypical revelation - the resurrection appearances. But in fact it is in such a context - God is "that than which no greater can be thought" is not an *a priori* conception but the content of revelation itself - that Barth's anti-realist (showing rather than saying) position is inescapable. This is the key argument of the next chapter.

Chapter Seven

I. Barth: the Epistemological Question Entirely a Function of *Sui Generis* Theological Parts.

To recapitulate the decisive result from the previous chapter: "The inward proof is also the outward proof" implies that Barth's theological 'epistemology' is always done through the eyes of the traditional philosopher. Everything he writes in *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* pertaining to the resolution of the "proof" itself can and should be read as if one were seeing things from that perspective:

The unbeliever's quest is not simply taken up in any casual fashion and incorporated into the theological task but *all the way through* [my italics] it is in fact treated as identical with the quest of the believer himself.¹

The drama intrinsic to this shared quest is a simple drama: it involves nothing more than two individuals on the plane of the external perspective and Anselm asking of the unbeliever/traditional philosopher that he consider the interface of the theological realm, which is to say, the latter commits himself to no more than the conditions of theology, much as in another field he would commit himself to the conditions of critical-historical research, or mathematics, or music.

For his part the traditional philosopher can confirm that the aim of theology is not thereby guaranteed since the conditions of theology are necessary but not sufficient conditions; hence if the aim of theology is achieved the conditions of theology have been met but, conversely, if the conditions have been met it does not follow that the aim of theology has been achieved. The conditions of theology must be understood in this light.

II. Prayer: the *Sui Generis* Condition of Theology.

Barth lists the conditions of theology in Part I of *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* in the section appropriately named "The Conditions of Theology" [*Die Bedingungen der Theologie*]. From beginning to end Barth's intention is to assimilate the epistemological question entirely as a function of *sui generis* theological parts.

¹ Barth, *FQI*, 67.

Accordingly, he lists a series of conditions, eight in total, each a necessary condition if inward understanding is to meet up with outward understanding. But one condition in particular stands out and is singled out for special emphasis because it is, as Barth himself saw, entirely *sui generis* to theology:

When we consider the connection which Anselm held to be necessary between theology and prayer we put our finger on the condition of *intelligere* which, unless we are completely mistaken, emerges at this point *sui generis* from all the others and which conditions all these others and makes them relative.²

But the significance of prayer in *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* is not in and what prayer is in itself but rather the meaning it is given in Barth's exegesis of Anselm's Proof of the existence of God in *Proslogion* 2-3.³

Anselm begins *Pros.* 2 with:

Therefore, Lord, who givest knowledge to faith, grant in whatever measure thou wilt, that I may know that thou dost exist as we believe and that thou art what we believe.

[*Ergo Domine, qui das fidei intellectum, da mihi ut quantum scis expendere, intelligam quia es sicut credimus, et hoc es quod credimus.*]⁴

Barth has this to say on the passage:

As we said earlier [when discussing prayer in the section "The Conditions of Theology]: Anselm thinks and proves in prayer and therefore not on logical presuppositions but acceptance in practice of the existence of the One whose existence he undertakes to think out and prove. The point which is becoming visible in *Pros.* 3 would be missed, and so the whole thing misunderstood, were the fact to be ignored that Anselm speaks about God while speaking to him.⁵

It should be noted that here Barth speaks not merely of prayer as it manifests itself locally in the context of *Pros.* 2-3 (although he does that too), he speaks of

² *Ibid*, 35.

³ This is why Barth will write in *CD I/1*:

"As regards the epistemological problem a particularly instructive document for the constitutive significance of faith of the object of faith is the first chapter of the *Proslogion* of Anselm of Canterbury. In the closest material relation to the famous proof of the existence of God immediately following, there is brought up here in the form of a prayer the problem whether God is present at all to the thinker who sets out to understand and explain the existence and nature of God." Barth, *CD I/1*, 230.

Later Barth will instantiate the same assertions Christocentrically, if he is not already thinking about them in such terms.

⁴ *Ibid*, 101.

⁵ *Ibid*, 101-2.

what is necessarily true of prayer as he understands it at the locus of his exposition in the section "The Conditions of Theology". One can think of the assertions on prayer at the locus of *Pros.* 2-3 as the reappearance of this section - that which could have just as easily reappeared in the section "The Conditions of Theology" - were it not more convenient to say it here.⁶ Part I if you like "breaks into" Part II.⁷

To reiterate Barth's conclusion with the appropriate degree of emphasis we can say: Anselm proves and thinks in prayer and therefore *not on logical presuppositions but acceptance in practice of the One he undertakes to think out and prove*. This is what prayer means in the context of Anselm's proof. This is why Anselm cannot but speak about God except in the context of speaking to Him.

Later in the exegesis of *Pros.* 3 Barth is once again not content to say Anselm prays and leave it at that: once again it is what prayer means that is really significant. The specific passage under exegesis is a passage occurring toward the end of *Pros.* 3:

And this thou art, O Lord our God. Thou dost exist in truth in such a way that thou canst not be conceived as not existing. And that with reason. For if any and every mind were able to conceive of something better than thee then the creature would be rising above the Creator. This would be most absurd.

[*Et hoc es tu, Domine Deus noster. Sic ergo vere es, Domine Deus meus, ut nec cogitari possis non esse: et merito. Si enim aliqua mens posset cogitare aliquid melius te, ascenderet creatura puer Creatorum et indicaret de Creatore, quod valde*

⁶ Hence to anticipate the overall exegetical conclusion: in order to understand Part I, one has to understand the section "The Path of Theology" in conjunction with the section "The Conditions of Theology". But to understand the latter, one has to proceed into the exegesis of *Pros.* 2-3. Indeed, the true character and emphasis of Barth's theological programme is necessarily suppressed if we omit what Barth says about the meaning of prayer in *Pros.* 2-3. Given it is not possible to misunderstand the logical ramifications of prayer as it is discussed in "The Conditions of Theology" and yet understand Anselm's proofs of the existence of God, it follows that the exegesis of *Pros.* 2-3 is integral to the conditions under which theology is taken.

⁷ Thus attempting to understand what is in *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* solely on the basis of what Barth has to say on method in Part I, as McCormack has done (McCormack, "Scholastic", 521), relies on constructing an artificial boundary between the two parts of the book which is not finally adhered to by the individual statements of the text. Though the rationale behind the artificial demarcation may be to simplify exposition of the text, such limiting exposition necessarily courts misunderstanding. The premise that only Part I is relevant to assessing the significance of *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* in Barth's theological development is a false one. An exception to the tendency in Barth scholarship to ignore Barth's exegesis of *Pros.* 2-4 is von Balthasar. He does provide an interpretation of Barth's exegesis of *Pros.* 2-4. Von Balthasar, *Karl Barth*, 137.

est absurdum.]⁸

Barth has this to say about the passage:

In the first place Anselm resumes the form of address to God, that is, he passes from the language of theological inquiry to the language of prayer. Or rather - once again he shows that the whole theological inquiry is intended to be understood and undertaken and carried through in prayer. In prayer and surely that means - by presupposing in the most positive manner conceivable the object of the inquiry, his Presence and His Authority for the course and the success of the inquiry concerning him.⁹

Barth's comment is an unequivocal restatement of that offered at the beginning of *Pros. 2*.¹⁰ Once again what is important is not what prayer means in itself but rather what it means in the epistemological context: *presupposing in the most positive manner conceivable the presence of the object of faith*.¹¹

What in the context of the two-character drama being enacted in *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* is the implication of the above for Barth and the traditional philosopher? The conclusion is drawn that when Barth asks the traditional philosopher that as a condition of theology he enter into the mode of prayer, he is in actual fact asking him to:

- accept, not on logical presuppositions, but in practice, the existence of the object of faith (the One whose existence he is asked to think out and prove on his own terms of rationality).
- presuppose in the most positive manner conceivable - which means without

⁸ Barth, *FQI*, 150.

⁹ *Ibid*, 150-151.

¹⁰ Barth himself explicitly makes this connection too in a footnote. *Ibid*, 150.

¹¹ Thus Barth can be said to delineate the relation between prayer and prototypical revelation in the following passage from "The Humanity of God":

"... God's humanity and the recognition of it demand that the thought and discourse of Christian theology take up a certain attitude and be carried out in a particular way. Theology can never deal with its object in a vacuum, in mere theory. It cannot affirm, consider and express truths that rest or are moved within themselves - not an abstract truth about God, or about man, or even about the intercourse between God and man. It can never substantiate, reflect, report in a monologue. There is no such thing as theological pictorial art. The humanity of God, just because it is an event, is not fixed in a picture. In correspondence with its object, the basic form of theology is prayer and sermon. [...] Christian discourse is at once prayer to God and address to this man [Jesus Christ]." Barth, "The Humanity of God", *Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers No. 8*, 46.

logical presuppositions - the presence of the object of faith.

But to repeat: though it may look as if Barth has simply preempted any need for proof at all, what we have here are necessary not sufficient conditions. Otherwise there would be no question of the traditional philosopher being convinced of the rationality of Barth's theological epistemology on his own grounds.¹²

III. From the External Perspective to the Interface of the Theological Realm [*der Raum der Theologie*]: Faith Described in Terms of its Object.

Insofar as the traditional philosopher agrees to go the length of what Barth terms the *sui generis* theological condition he enters into the *sui generis* autonomous realm of theology that is faith described in terms of its object. Therein lies a result of the first magnitude for Barth in that, as will become apparent, theology remains theology from beginning to end.

We return to the prototypicality theme already evident in Barth's *Church Dogmatics* but now as it extends into the field of epistemology. The hermeneutical significance of prayer in *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* consists in the fact that when the traditional philosopher takes this simple step he finds himself in the prototypical epistemic relation to the presence of God he would have been in had he been a witness on the plane of the resurrection narratives where the faith of the resurrection witnesses is described in terms of its object. In other words, to the extent that the traditional philosopher puts himself into their shoes, the resurrection witnesses continue on in their role as prototypical participants at the interface of the

¹² Such a position distinguishes him from the position often ascribed to him by critic and friend alike, namely that his first and primary step consists in making a (realist) affirmation of the existence of God. Bartley holds that Barth "begins with the assumption or commitment that 'revelation happened.'" Bartley *Retreat*, 2nd edition, 44. Hence it is not surprising that Bartley emphasises Barth's affinity with Kierkegaard. *Ibid.*, 39-40. And even a relatively sympathetic theologian like Küng can write that Barth's theology starts from the premise: "Presuming that it is true: God exists" H Küng, *Theology for the Third Millennium: an ecumenical view*, translated by P Heinegg, (London, HarperCollins, 1991), 276. And Torrance the most vociferous and rigorous voice behind the campaign to register Barth as a realist theologian writes: "How ... are we to distinguish the independent objective reality from our experience of it ...? That is the crucial question that a realist theology must face. It takes as its fundamental proposition that God is, and so affirms that God has reality independently of our knowledge of him." Torrance, *Biblical*, 53

theological realm. Everything else is held constant save that the presence of God is now, in accord with Barth's Christocentric impulse, materially present in the presence of Jesus Christ in His resurrection appearances. Conversely, if you like, on the plane of *Proslogion* 2-3, epistemic relations held constant, the traditional philosopher is now represented prototypically, and therefore typologically, by the resurrection (appearances) witnesses, and the presence of God is fleshed out with the content of Jesus Christ's presence in His resurrection appearances.

In other words, just as *God* reveals Himself and God reveals *Himself* is prototypically instantiated by *Jesus Christ* reveals Himself and Jesus Christ reveals *Himself*, then so in IV/1 the resurrection appearances to the witnesses is (among other things) the prototypical instantiation of God's self-revelation to the traditional philosopher in *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*.

There is no question of his being compromised as traditional philosopher when this happens to him, which is to say, it is no contradiction for Barth to assert, as he has done in *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, that the philosopher still sees things through the eyes of the traditional philosopher but also, given prototypicality, sees things through the eyes of the Easter witnesses. It is as if from the plane of the external perspective the traditional philosopher finds himself in the same circumstances the disciples found themselves during the Forty Days following Easter morning. And that means it is as if the traditional philosopher leaves the plane of the external perspective and finds himself at the interface of the theological realm.

That this is what happens to the traditional philosopher can be shown as follows. For the path of theology to begin its course, the conditions of theology must be met. But the path of theology is precisely what is delineated in the section "The Path of Theology". In other words, the logical relation between the section "The Path of Theology" and the section "The Conditions of Theology" is that the former constitutes the whole of which the conditions of theology are a logical part.¹³

¹³ The relationship between the "The Conditions of Theology" and "The Path of Theology" is such that the conditions of theology Barth propounds in the former are the logical consequence or presupposition of the epistemological structure delineated as the path or process of theology. To put it another way: if the process or path of theology is to be an event at all then the conditions of theology must necessarily have been met. It is not possible to explicate the process of theology in

Specifically, in *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* to presuppose in the most positive manner conceivable the presence of the object of faith is to place oneself in the position where the *ratio* of the object of faith is taken up into the knowledge of the object of faith. But the *ratio* of the object of faith being taken up into the knowledge of the object of faith (faith) is interchangeable with faith described in terms of its object (they have been shown to mean the same thing); *ergo* for the philosopher to presuppose in the most positive manner conceivable the presence of the object of faith is to place himself in the realm of faith described in terms of its object.

IV. The Metadilemma and the Rejection of Realism: Showing and Saying and the First Indication of the Grammatical *A Posteriori* (the Grammatical Proposition). Enter Wittgenstein Again.

What does it mean for the traditional philosopher to be at the interface to this realm? Faith described in terms of its *sui generis* object, excluding as it does the heteronomous forces of non-theology (in Barth's theology this role is occupied by historicism and psychologism), is *sui generis* to theology to a degree unmatched by his earlier dialectical mode of speech about God. Yet just as dialectical speech could not speak of God directly but only "Yes" and "No" ("Yes" and "No" together but never the "Yes" without the "No" or the "No" without the "Yes"), then so too the *Church Dogmatics* finds a way of affirming the continuing presence of this failure without resorting to the less than *sui generis* dialectical method.

Indeed, the failure to speak directly (or indirectly) about God - to refer (in the realist sense) to God - at the theological realm of faith described in terms of its object is no less than a *corollary* of the thesis of the *sui generis* autonomy of theology. Chapter 1 set out four methodological theses applicable to theology and philosophy as conceived by Barth and Wittgenstein respectively. The first thesis, in particular, asserted that if x is autonomous it follows x is not assimilable to, i.e., is not a function of, -x. Accordingly, for Barth theology was not a function of non-theology, and for Wittgenstein philosophy was not a function of non-philosophy.

a way that contradicts these conditions.

For the later as for the earlier Wittgenstein, one certain route to the non-autonomy pending extinction of philosophy was to construe the subject as a kind of science whose task was to represent reality or make truth-claims about that region of reality traditionally designated as "philosophical".¹⁴ To the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* this was no less than the practice of philosophy as science, philosophy as a function of science and therefore of non-philosophy. The authentically philosophical realm of the *Tractatus* is precisely where the saying of pure logic collapses to the showing of pure logic. Indeed, the secondary doctrine of the *Tractatus* - Wittgenstein's theory of factual propositions - is nothing less than a species of realism.¹⁵ In other words, in the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein regarded realism as part and parcel of science (non-philosophy).¹⁶

In the later as in the early philosophy, realism as a species of philosophical saying collapses to showing.¹⁷ Not only is realism not a sufficient condition of

¹⁴ Wittgenstein's criterion of autonomy is more stringent than Kant's: Kant quite clearly did not conclude that if philosophy was a science (a "super-science" or the "queen of the sciences") it had relinquished its autonomy *qua* philosophy.

¹⁵ See Hacker, *Insight*, 63.

¹⁶ This explains the rationale behind *TLP* 6.54. Accordingly, it is essential to realise that, in contradistinction to Frege and Russell, Wittgenstein was not a realist about logic (or an idealist): he was only realist about that aspect of the *Tractatus* that delineates the realm of non-philosophy.

¹⁷ Most commentators on Wittgenstein would, I think, agree with the following observation: it is easier to prove the showing and saying distinction is fundamental to the earlier philosophy than it is to prove it is fundamental to the later philosophy. Putting aside Wittgenstein's own remark that it constituted the 'cardinal problem of philosophy', the number of references to the distinction in the *Tractatus* make it abundantly clear to us that it is a central doctrine. In contrast, one might almost say of the later philosophy that there the distinction is conspicuous by its absence, such is the paucity of reference to it. Yet in the face of this apparent near absence there has been support for the abiding pervasive presence of the distinction in the later philosophy. Several commentators take the view, not merely that the distinction survives, but that it is central to an understanding of the later philosophy. For Kenny, the distinction between saying and showing was fundamental to both his earlier and his later philosophy. Kenny, *Wittgenstein*, 45. McGuinness writes in the first part of his biography on Wittgenstein that the distinction is "a key notion, perhaps even throughout Wittgenstein's entire philosophical life." McGuinness, *Wittgenstein*, 199. Pears observes: "In the *Tractatus* this doctrine is presented in the rigid framework of logical atomism. The attachment of factual discourse to the world is achieved *au fond* through elementary sentences, each of which is linked to its own bit of reality and displays the simple possibility which it asserts to be realized. There is no way in which such possibilities can be described or explained; each one is a separate mystery, eluding the grasp of science. In the later system, this mystery did not disappear, but, rather, is spread over the whole surface of human language and behaviour." Pears, *Prison*, vol 1, 193.

resolving the metaphilosophical dilemma, it is a sufficient condition of *not* resolving it. In other words, in the later philosophy its presence is again interpreted as the intrusion of non-philosophy.¹⁸

In Barth the same stringent requirements hold for what emerges from *sui generis* theological epistemology. As we shall see, within the realm of faith described in terms of its object Barth rejects as non-theological, substantive truth-claims insofar as they attempt to *refer in a realist sense* to the object in which terms faith is described, Jesus Christ's resurrection appearances, God's self-revelation, prototypical revelation. Not only is faith described in terms of its object not at odds with *sui generis* theology (nor Overbeck's dilemma), it is in fact a corollary of it (and of resolving the dilemma); and not only is realism not a sufficient condition for *sui generis* theology, it is in fact a sufficient condition (at the interface of the theological realm) for its negation - because it assimilates theology to non-theology. Therefore Barth rejects realism, though that does not make him non-realist for the traditional anti-realist (idealist) reasons.

For Barth theological realism is no more a sufficient condition of theology than is discourse the subject matter of which is referred to by the word "God" (not to be confused with discourse the subject matter of which is *God*).

Ingolf Dalferth offers as precise, complete and intellectually sophisticated

¹⁸ The showing and saying distinction now survives in a different form. Wittgenstein's later philosophical work undermines the idea that philosophy's own special business is philosophical theories or doctrines; accordingly, it repudiates the main philosophical theory of the *Tractatus*, namely that language contains a hidden logical form waiting to be excavated by the philosopher. Retrospectively, the *Tractatus* appeared, *inter alia*, nothing less than a blue-print for a scientific model of philosophy. Thus Wittgenstein in conversation with Friedrich Waismann: "The answers to philosophical problems can never be surprising. In philosophy you can never discover anything. I myself, however, had not clearly enough understood this, and offended against it [in the *Tractatus*]." F Waismann, *Ludwig Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle*, edited by B F McGuinness, translated by B F McGuinness and J Schulte, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1979), 182-183). His repudiation of this thesis (embodying as it did the 'compositionality' thesis) goes a long way to explaining Wittgenstein's overt repudiation of the errors of the *Tractatus* in the "Preface" to the *Investigations*. Wittgenstein, *PI*, viii. Hence, with logical calculi denied their earlier status, there was no place in the later philosophy for a theory or doctrine of showing and saying. And this is indeed the case: there is no mention of the doctrine of showing and saying anywhere in the later works. But it does not then follow that there could be no place for the distinction *per se*: though it can no longer manifest itself at the locus of logical form, it now manifests itself at the locus of language just as it is - on the surface where everything is open to view - such that it is our forms of life, language-games embodied, which show what cannot be said.

a defence of Barth as theological realist as one will find in the theological literature. For him Barth's realism is a particularly full-blooded species, satisfying not one but all three traditional dimensions of realism: ontological realism; semantic realism; epistemological realism.¹⁹ Yet there is a serious problem with Dalferth's interpretation of Barth as theological realist. If Barth does resolve the metatheological dilemma then realism cannot be a sufficient condition of *sui generis* theological truth (or *sui generis* theology). For Dalferth advocates that Barth is a theological realist but fails to resolve the metatheological dilemma.²⁰ In other words, had theological realism been a sufficient condition of resolving the dilemma, Dalferth could have cited Barth as a sufficient condition of the assertion that there are genuine non-reducible theological problems. Is the explanation simply one of an enormous oversight on Dalferth's part? No, the explanation is that theological realism is *not* a sufficient condition of *sui generis* theological truth.

If in Barth the external perspective of Reason - the symmetrical principle of truth and the principle of proof - collapses to *theological* truth then the philosopher's realism must collapse to faith described in terms of its object, which is to say, faith as a description of the object of faith collapses to faith described in terms of its object.²¹

It has been shown (in chapter 5) that faith as a description of the object of

¹⁹ Dalferth, "Karl Barth's Eschatological Realism", 16-17.

²⁰ See chapter 1 of this thesis. Of course, it may be that though Dalferth cannot see how realism is a sufficient condition of resolving the dilemma, it does not follow that it isn't. My argument is: realism does not resolve the dilemma; Barth does; *ergo* Barth is not a realist.

²¹ That the scope of analogy operates within faith described in terms of its object as faith *analogically* described in terms of its object is sufficient proof that analogy does not necessarily entail realism. It only entails that in whatever way God-language is used, it can only be used analogically. Given the epistemological convergence of faith described in terms of its object and the meaning of prayer (presupposing in the most positive manner the presence of God), it follows that analogy operates *within* the scope of prayer, the *sui generis* condition of theology. Barth *FQI*, 29-30. Prayer determines analogy, not vice-versa. Analogy is one of the conditions conditioned by the *sui generis* theological condition. In other words, analogy is less central to Barth's later theology than has been traditionally thought, and *contra* Frei, *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* does not signal a turn to analogy. See Frei, "Niebuhr's Theological Background" in P Ramsey (ed), *Faith and Ethics* (New York, Harper, 1957), 50-51. In fact there are no *a priori* reasons why analogy could not have functioned within the scope of dialectical speech about God since in both affirmation and negation "God" is used analogically (in the etymological sense).

faith means the same as knowledge of the object of faith as a description of the object of faith; that knowledge of the object of faith described in terms of its object means the same as the *ratio* of the object of faith being taken up into knowledge of the object of faith.

Thus knowledge as a description of the object of faith collapses to knowledge described in terms of its object. But what is it that collapses? What collapses is a description that could be either true or false, a description constituting a substantive truth if what it described were true, and false if what it described were false. What collapses is the symmetrical principle of truth. And to what does it collapse? It collapses to faith described in terms of its object at the interface of the theological realm. But a description that is in terms of its object is neither a necessary truth nor indeed a realist truth (one that could be either true or false). One possibility, then, is that it is true by definition. However, it can be shown it is not an analytic truth in the purely technical sense. By a *reductio ad absurdum* it can be shown that if faith described in terms of its object were a species of realism then, given faith is a description of the object of faith, it follows that the description of the object of faith is itself described in terms of its object; in which case what we are left with is meta-description, a description of a description, which is to say, a description of a use of words. Such a description does not entail realism. And though it resembles an *analytic truth* (and does not necessarily exclude that genus), it is in fact something approximating to what Wittgenstein calls a *grammatical proposition*.²²

In other words, at the realm of faith described in terms of its object Barth as theologian preserves the failure implicit in dialectical speech about God in the post-*Fides Quaerens Intellectum* theology by asserting that in that realm the traditional

²² Technically, an analytic statement or truth is a truth that is true in virtue of the meanings of its words. Strictly speaking, a grammatical truth e.g. "This is (what we call) a physical object" is not an analytic truth since, though a description of a use of words, it may be either true or false. Yet if it is true, it is true in virtue of a use of words. Hence, it is sufficiently 'analytic' to fall into the analytic category. It is not a synthetic truth since, as will be seen, one cannot derive from it the assertion that physical objects exist. Later in this thesis we will use the term 'analytic *a posteriori*'. Anyone who knows the traditional semantic, epistemic and metaphysical philosophical categories will know that an analytic *a posteriori* statement is logically impossible (unlike an analytic *a priori* or an *a posteriori* necessary statement). But if the analytic component of "analytic *a posteriori*" is taken in the sense of a grammatical truth then there is no inconsistency.

philosopher sees that proper clarification of his concepts, of the concepts appropriate to the realm of faith described in terms of its object, "does not yield truths other than grammatical ones."²³

V. Wittgenstein's Concept of a Grammatical Proposition.

"The concept of a grammatical proposition", writes Debra Aidun, "is of great significance in the later work of Wittgenstein; it plays a central role in his account of the nature of philosophical confusion and of its cure. Philosophical problems arise largely when expressions which are actually grammatical propositions are taken to be metaphysical truths."²⁴

Examples Wittgenstein gives of such propositions are:

"Every rod has a length."

"The class of lions is not a lion, but the class of classes is a class."

"An order orders its own execution."

"I can't feel your toothache."

"You can't hear God speak to someone else, you can hear him only if you are being addressed."²⁵

Grammatical propositions share one important characteristic which is that though they have the form of empirical propositions and appear to make informative assertions about various states of affair just as empirical propositions do, they say nothing about these states of affairs. Moreover that they say nothing is not down to reference but no predication but rather a failure of realist reference *per se*. Hence, to regard grammatical propositions, because of these superficial similarities to empirical propositions, as expressions making substantive claims which are, moreover, necessarily true, (as metaphysicians are apt to view their propositions) is to succumb to grammatical illusion. Rather, such propositions are explanations of

²³ Hacker, *Insight*, 204.

²⁴ D Aidun, "Wittgenstein on Grammatical Propositions", in Shanker (ed), *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Critical Assessments*, vol ii, (London, Croom Helm, 1986), 142.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 142.

meaning and "an explanation of meaning is not an empirical proposition ... but a rule."²⁶

This is undoubtedly the sense Wittgenstein assigns to the grammatical proposition at the centre of his critique of classical epistemology in *On Certainty*, "There are physical objects (The external world exists)":

"A is a physical object" is a piece of instruction we give only to someone who doesn't understand either what "A" means or what "physical object" means. Thus it is instruction about the use of words, and "physical object" is a logical concept. (Like colour, quantity, ...). And that is why no propositions "There are physical objects" can be formulated. Yet we encounter such unsuccessful shots at every turn.²⁷

According to Hacker, to say that the external world exists, if it means anything, is to say that material objects that are independent of our senses exist. But to say that material objects are independent of our perceptions of them is a grammatical proposition, a rule for the use of material object names. If it means anything it says no more than that there are rules for the correct employment of names of material objects.²⁸

VI. Philosophical Theses Collapse to Grammatical Propositions. (Realism Collapses to Grammatical Propositions.)

Yet, Hacker notes,²⁹ Wittgenstein adds that this by itself is not an adequate

²⁶ Wittgenstein, *PG*, 68. Aidun shows that to the extent Wittgenstein uses grammatical propositions as grammatical rules they are either (1) rules of grammar allowing or proscribing some combination of words or (2) statements to the effect that certain expressions *are* allowed or forbidden in a language. Aidun, "Grammatical Propositions", 143. Aidun also notes that Wittgenstein's remarks about grammatical propositions bring to mind his distinction between showing and saying: grammatical propositions *show* that words are used in certain ways. *Ibid*, 147-148.

²⁷ Wittgenstein, *OC* § 36.

²⁸ Hacker, *Insight*, 210. Elsewhere when speaking of grammatical propositions generally, Hacker writes that philosophical propositions are *norms of representation*, i.e., grammatical propositions, unavoidably cast in the role of object represented. *Ibid*, 149. According to Monk, grammatical propositions or grammatical truths are "not descriptive of the world but part of our conceptual framework; it is then a part of logic. ... these 'framework propositions' do not describe a body of knowledge; they understand the way in which we understand the world." Monk, *Wittgenstein*, 563.

²⁹ Hacker, *insight*, 210.

answer to the sceptic, the traditional philosopher. At *OC* § 37 Wittgenstein writes:

But is it an adequate answer to the scepticism of the idealist or the assurances of the realist to say that "There are physical objects" is nonsense: For them after all it is not nonsense. It would however be an answer to say: this assertion or its opposite is a misfiring attempt to express what can't be expressed like that.³⁰

In other words, Wittgenstein doubted this answer by itself constituted sufficient conditions for persuading the traditional philosopher to relinquish the plane of the external perspective. Unlike the *Philosophical Investigations*, *On Certainty* "is all first-draft material which (Wittgenstein) did not live to excerpt and polish."³¹ Hacker asserts that, though it cannot be gainsaid that in *On Certainty* Wittgenstein followed a definite trajectory, he did not follow it through on the particular issue of the problem of the existence of the external world.³²

Von Wright summarises the central theme of *On Certainty* as follows:

In every situation where a claim to knowledge is being established, or a doubt settled, or an item of linguistic communication (intimation, order, question) understood, a bulk of presuppositions already stand fast, are taken for granted. They form a kind of 'system'. If this were not so, knowledge and doubt, judging and understanding, error and truth would not 'exist', that is, we should not have and handle these concepts in the way we do. 'All testing, all confirmation and disconfirmation of a hypothesis takes place already within a system. And this system is not a more or less arbitrary and doubtful point of departure for all our arguments: no, it belongs to the essence of what we call an argument. The system is not so much the point of departure as the element in which arguments have their life.'*(OC* § 105).³³

Yet while von Wright's definition encompasses the sense in which Wittgenstein

³⁰ Wittgenstein, *OC* § 37.

³¹ See Anscombe and von Wright's "Preface" to *On Certainty*.

³² However Hacker goes on to say that "*On Certainty* furnishes a wealth of argument that impinges on it." Hacker, *Insight*, 208. More extremely, Luckhardt has argued that *On Certainty* cannot be consistent with the *Philosophical Investigations* since it is not even self-consistent. Yet what his thesis does not show is that the *central* themes of *On Certainty* cannot be continuous with the later conception of philosophy as presented in the *Investigations*. C G Luckhardt, "Wittgenstein on Paradigms and Paradigm Cases: problems With *On Certainty*" in E Leinfellner, W Leinfellner, H Berghel, and A Hübner (ed), *Wittgenstein And His Impact On Contemporary Thought* (Vienna, Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1978), 379-385.

³³ Von Wright, "Wittgenstein on Certainty", *Wittgenstein*, 171. Hacker also agrees that this is the main theme adding that Wittgenstein yet again "ploughs up the field of European philosophy". Hacker, *Insight*, 214. He describes a similar such 'system' as the main theme of *On Certainty*. Monk too offers a similar summary of *On Certainty*. Monk, *Wittgenstein*, 555-558, 563-564, 569-571.

speaks of the classical epistemologist doubting, proving, entertaining the possibility of a mistake in a variety of situations and about a variety of things, insofar as he believes Wittgenstein's argument is encapsulated in *OC* § 105 it does not exhaust all the potential avenues of argument in *On Certainty*. In particular, it cannot do justice to all aspects of the grammatical proposition "There are physical objects (The external world exists)" as it falls within the scope of Wittgenstein's handling of the problem of the existence of the external world,³⁴ a problem, as we saw, much reflected on by the classical modern philosophical tradition. Clearly for Wittgenstein the ostensible philosophical proposition "There are physical objects" (The external world exists)" is not a hypothesis subject to testing, confirmation or disconfirmation; but neither is it restricted to being a part of a system of presuppositions that we have to bring to the world before exploring it.

In other words, true to the later conception of philosophy as empathetic to the traditional philosopher's rationality, implicit in Wittgenstein's misgiving at *OC* § 37 is an acknowledgement that simply to inform the traditional philosopher that, e.g., "Physical objects exist" is used in such-and-such a way - in this case to inform us how "physical object" is employed - is not an argument sufficient to convince the traditional philosopher on his own grounds and terms.³⁵ Wittgenstein accepts that, since the traditional philosopher can reply, how certain other people use the statement - even in ordinary circumstances - is of no concern to him *qua* philosopher, he remains *free to choose* how to use "Physical objects exist"; accordingly he will continue to use it to make a substantive philosophical truth-claim.

Fortunately, Wittgenstein's argument is a great deal more cogent than this. While granting that our use of "This is a physical object" might have been different, Wittgenstein is able - by eliminating the degrees of freedom available to the

³⁴ To be sure, this is not to say that there are not some aspects of this problem that are subsumed by von Wright's synopsis, e.g., *OC* § 155.

³⁵ Thus Wittgenstein implicitly distinguishes himself from the Oxford school of linguistic philosophy under the stewardship of J L Austin. For it is precisely in the sphere of rational argument that the limitations of Austin *vis-à-vis* Wittgenstein show up. See M McGinn, *Sense and Certainty* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1989), 101.

philosopher - to derive the more powerful conclusion that "Physical objects exist" *couldn't mean other than* a grammatical proposition.³⁶ There is no logical alternative but for the realist gap to collapse. In other words, the traditional philosopher *qua* traditional philosopher is *brought to see* that the substantive sense with which he wishes to imbue "Physical objects exist" (whether true or false) cannot but collapse to that of a grammatical proposition. Much as in the manner in which Jastrow's duck-rabbit figure changes before our very eyes from one to the other,³⁷ the philosopher's affirmation of a solid kernel of substantive truth dissolves before his very eyes into an empty shell; it leaves behind a self-enclosed semantic realm, from which the speaker is unable to break out into an imagined (though illusory) realm of philosophical realism (or idealism); it leaves behind a self-enclosed realm, in other words, within which the speaker is sealed, impotent, powerless, helplessly uninformative about anything 'philosophical'; it leaves behind a realm in which the sequence of words "This is a physical object" can (logically) only be an answer to the question "What is it you use 'physical objects' to speak of?" and not an answer to the realist philosopher's question "Do physical objects exist" (where from the apparently substantive thesis 'This is a physical object' he draws the apparently substantive conclusion '*ergo* Physical objects exist (The external world exists)'). Insofar as philosophical theses reduce in this way to grammatical propositions that is why Wittgenstein said in the *Philosophical Investigations* in his inimitably transparent yet cryptic way:

³⁶ To clear up a potential confusion. Take the famous Aristotelian syllogism:

All men are mortal

Socrates is a man

—Socrates is mortal

That "is" means what it mean here is contingent: it might have meant otherwise. Suppose in fact it means what "is not" conventionally means: it then follows that the assertion expressed by "Socrates is mortal" is invalid. But it does not then follow that the assertion expressed by the conclusion of this syllogism when taken in its conventional sense, is invalid. It still remains the case that the conclusion could not be otherwise. In logic - and in language generally - we must distinguish between the linguistic tokens and that which they mean (without necessarily being committed to a Platonic form of semantic realism).

³⁷ Wittgenstein did of course use Jastrow's duck-rabbit figure as a means of eliminating philosophical confusion in the course of analyzing what it is to see something as something else, seeing the duck as a rabbit and vice-versa, ("seeing as"). Wittgenstein *PI II*, 194.

If one tried to advance *theses* in philosophy, it would never be possible to debate them, because everyone would agree with them.³⁸

It is in that sense - in that context - that philosophical theses reduce to verbal disputes, not as Popper would have it, that the later philosophy is itself *about* verbal disputes and not about real philosophical theses.³⁹ It *is* about real philosophical theses that turn out to collapse to grammatical truths, i.e., leaving behind nothing but (possible) verbal disputes.

VII. The External Perspective in *On Certainty*: Descartes and G E Moore.

Notwithstanding the fact that Wittgenstein's designation of Descartes as an idealist or solipsist may be historically inaccurate, it is clear that in *OC* § 37 Wittgenstein employs the terms "idealist" and "realist" to pick out Descartes' and G E Moore's respective philosophical positions.⁴⁰ Descartes and Moore represent the plane of the external perspective in *On Certainty*. It is their philosophical propositions that Wittgenstein would "like to expunge from philosophical language."⁴¹

³⁸ Wittgenstein, *PI* § 128.

³⁹ This appears as a constant refrain in Popper's criticism of the later philosophy. See, for example, Popper, *Unended Quest: An Intellectual Autobiography* (Glasgow, Fontana, 1976), 18-31, 122, 124.

⁴⁰ By "realist" Wittgenstein means Moore's position; by "idealist" Descartes' position. That is why he means "solipsist" when he uses the term "idealist". F Kerr, *Theology After Wittgenstein* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986), 122.

⁴¹ Wittgenstein, *OC* § 31. According to McGinn *On Certainty* is no dogmatic rebuttal of scepticism since it refuses to allow the sceptic's apprehensions to arise in the first place: "The point is that such an account [Wittgenstein's "reflective stance toward human practice"] never allows the sceptic's misapprehensions to arise and threaten either ordinary practice or the naturalistic outlook that characterises our initial position in philosophy. The natural outlook that is Wittgenstein's outlook should not, therefore be regarded as needing to regain ground from the sceptic: the sceptical conclusion has not yet been allowed to arise and threaten it." McGinn, *Sense and Certainty*, 150-1.

This is surely mistaken. Descartes has to be allowed to go to the limit - as far as his scepticism is capable of taking him. As has already been said, in the course of the 'therapy' Wittgenstein subjects himself to the 'madness' of Cartesian scepticism - takes on the identity of the sceptic - in order to persuade himself (and the sceptic) of the logical absurdity of the position. For it is only by being

Historically speaking, Moore was some hundred years too late to be included in the classical modern philosophical tradition. Nevertheless, his contribution to the problem of the existence of the external world was another implicit affirmation of the symmetrical principle of truth (truth as representation) and the principle of proof. It was therefore apologetic in essence.

The question Descartes raised in *Meditation* I was whether any of our beliefs are entirely certain and free from doubt. Belief in the external world was one such belief he failed to free from doubt.

Moore sought to prove as against Descartes that he knew the external world existed and this because there were certain things whose existence he did know: therefore it followed the external world existed.

According to Moore contingent propositions can be divided into two classes, one whose degree of certainty is not self-evident and the other whose degree of certainty is. The latter Moore calls *common sense* propositions. For a proposition to qualify as a common sense proposition it must satisfy five criteria. The first two are the most important: *universal acceptance* (that there are many things which we all do, in ordinary life constantly believe, e.g., our belief in the existence of material objects); *compulsive acceptance* (beliefs that we cannot help holding even if we have no rational justification for holding them, e.g., the existence of material objects).⁴² Though such criteria do not constitute proof of the truth of these propositions, it does not follow it is not reasonable to believe them to be true. Common sense propositions are *ultimate*, in the sense that each one (on Moore's terms) is "true *by itself* alone".⁴³ We know such things "without inference",

shown that what he thought is logically possible is in fact logically impossible will he then rationally "expunge his philosophical language" (Wittgenstein *OC* § 31), of Cartesian scepticism.

⁴² The other three are: beliefs whose denial issues in various kinds of inconsistency; beliefs the denial of which issues in a special type of inconsistency, namely that to say they are part of a 'Common Sense view of the World' is to say that they are true; beliefs whose self-evidence one can see by inspection. Moore uses these criteria to distinguish basic foundational propositions from philosophical propositions whose degree of certainty is less self-evident. A R White, *G E Moore. A Critical Exposition* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1958), 11-14. See also White, "G E Moore", in O'Connor (ed), *A Critical History of Western Philosophy*, 465.

⁴³ White, *Moore*, 16.

"immediately".⁴⁴

Accordingly, in "A Defence of Common Sense", Moore, having established that we know at least some common sense propositions, proceeded to prove the existence of the external world.⁴⁵ According to Moore, known 'common sense' propositions, e.g., that the object he was now pointing to was his hand, *logically imply* the reality of material things. Thus, in Moore's philosophical argument, "There are physical objects" is deducible from his most famous example of a known common sense proposition: "here is one hand and here is another."⁴⁶

In the opening sentence of *On Certainty* Wittgenstein remarks on just this example:

If you do know that *here is one hand*, we'll grant you all the rest.⁴⁷

That is, Wittgenstein is willing to grant Moore knows the external world exists or that there are physical objects if it is the case he knows *here is one hand*. For whatever it is that Moore does know, Wittgenstein is sure it is not this antecedent proposition.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 15.

⁴⁵ The concept of a proof does not appear until the later "Proof of an External World" but it is implicit in "A Defence of Common Sense" since common sense propositions are taken to *imply* the reality of material things. See G E Moore, "A Defence of Common Sense", *Philosophical Papers* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1959), 38.

⁴⁶ Moore, "Proof of an External World", *Philosophical Papers* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1959). The reason for choosing this example has nothing to do with the fact that, for example, his hand is attached to his body. Rather, it is because it seems to Moore that if we know any propositions at all, this must be one of them.

⁴⁷ Wittgenstein, *OC* § 1.

⁴⁸ He continues at *OC* § 1:

"When one says that such and such a proposition can't be proved, of course that does not mean that it can't be derived from other propositions; any proposition can be derived from other ones. But they may be no more certain than it is itself. (On this a curious remark by H. Newman.)"

Wittgenstein does not dispute that the proposition 'There are physical objects' follows from Moore knowing *here is one hand*. But if the antecedent proposition is nonsense then it must logically follow that the consequent philosophical proposition is nonsense too. For if a proposition is nonsense it can only entail other nonsense propositions. That Wittgenstein insinuates both propositions are nonsense, making it senseless to ask for proof, is supported by remark following at *OC* § 2. For in *OC* § 2 he clearly means to cite an example of a logically sound argument that does not exclude the possibility its material conclusion is nonsense. In this passage Wittgenstein switches from Moore at

According to Wittgenstein Moore's argument goes as follows:

The statement "I know that here is a hand" may then be continued: "for it's *my* hand that I'm looking at". Then a reasonable man will not doubt that I know.

But to the idealist this is simply begging the question:

- Nor will the idealist; rather he will say that he was not dealing with the practical doubt which is being dismissed, but there is a further doubt *behind* that one. That this is an illusion has to be shown in a different way.⁴⁹

That is to say, that there is no such philosophical level 'behind' has to be shown in a way different from Moore's dogmatic rebuttal. In other words, though Wittgenstein was sympathetic to Moore's aim, the later philosophy unconditionally opposes the idea that there can be such a thing as a *philosophy* of common-sense, a philosophy of (in Moore's sense) realism. Von Wright writes:

Wittgenstein thought Moore's rebuttal of scepticism was interesting and original. But he would not have been the philosopher he was, had he declared himself in agreement with Moore. On the contrary, he was anxious to refute Moore's explicit philosophical position practically on every point. Moore's claim that he knew this or that was philosophically worthless, Wittgenstein thought; most of the "common sense" things Moore said he knew are things which nobody can, in fact, be correctly said to *know*. Moore, moreover, was mistaken in thinking there was *evidence* for the truth of the propositions in question; mistaken also in thinking that they could be used for *proving* such things as the existence of the external world; and mistaken finally in holding the alleged proved theses to be *contingent* truths. But while disagreeing with what Moore had said, Wittgenstein was at the same time in sympathy with the tendency implicit in Moore's efforts.⁵⁰

VIII. "As if 'The External World Exists' Could be False Other Than the External World Not Existing."

Wittgenstein appears to vindicate Moore's bipartite classification of propositions. Certainly, he is not adverse to Moore's isolation of common sense

OC § 1 to Descartes. OC § 2 is an implicit reference to Descartes in *Meditations* II. There Descartes doubts the existence of the external world but at the same time holds "it is very certain that it seems to me that I see light, hear noise and feel heat." Wittgenstein responds:

"From it *seeming* to me - or to everyone - to be so, it doesn't follow that it is so. What we can ask is whether it makes sense to doubt it."

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, § 19.

⁵⁰ Von Wright "Wittgenstein on Certainty", *Wittgenstein*, 168.

propositions and presupposes something like the same distinction in order to concentrate on the peculiar nature of these propositions:

[The] situation is not the same for a proposition like "At this distance from the sun there is a planet" and "Here is a hand" (namely my own hand). The second can't be called a hypothesis. But there isn't a sharp dividing line between them.⁵¹

Again a little later:

For it is not true that a mistake merely gets more and more improbable as we pass from the planet to my own hand. No: at some point it has ceased to be conceivable.⁵²

Yet Wittgenstein presupposes the existence of common sense propositions as distinct from "hypotheses" (though not necessarily the accompanying criteria) only in order to reject them by means of a *reductio ad absurdum*.

In the *Investigations* Wittgenstein makes only one remark bearing on the resolution of the realist-idealist controversy. It is of singular importance for understanding *On Certainty* and for developing the argument hinted at in *OC* § 37. At *PI* § 402 Wittgenstein writes:

When ... we disapprove of the expressions of ordinary language (which are after all performing their office) we have a picture in our heads which conflicts with the picture of our ordinary way of speaking. Whereas we are tempted to say that our way of speaking does not describe the facts as they really are.⁵³

Wittgenstein's response is designed to reveal the real and absurd nature of the sceptical (realist) commitment:

As if, for example the proposition "he has pains" could be false in some other way than by that man's *not* having pains. As if the form of expression were saying something false even when the propositions *faute*

⁵¹ Wittgenstein, *OC* § 52.

⁵² *Ibid.*, § 54.

⁵³ The basis for pursuing Wittgenstein's argument in *On Certainty* in the *Philosophical Investigations* is that the thematic similarity of *PI* § 402 and *OC* § 19 is unmistakable. Indeed, *PI* § 402 constitutes what Wittgenstein calls a "right point of attack" for the critique of the traditional philosopher. Wittgenstein continues at *OC* § 37: "And that it does misfire can be shown; but that isn't the end of the matter. We need to realise that what presents itself to us as the first expression of a difficulty, or of its solution, may as yet not be correctly expressed at all. Just as one who has a just censure of a picture to make will often at first offer the censure where it does not belong, an *investigation* is needed in order to find the right point of attack for the critic."

de mieux asserted something true.⁵⁴

The realist gap between statement and fact - between "he has pains" and the fact that he has pains - consists in the possibility that the statement (*faute de mieux*) might be false. But in such a situation the only sense in which it could be false is if "the man has pains" could be false other than the man not having pains. Only then has Descartes grounds for laying claim to a deeper ontological level, a level unique to traditional philosophy, a level on which our ordinary expressions fail to impinge, fail to make any sort of impact. For only then is there anything 'outside' Wittgenstein's language-games and forms of life. Only then is there a realist gap. In other words, if it's true that the man has pains then it's necessarily true that the man has pains is true (to be distinguished from: it's necessarily true that the man has pains, which is false).

The problem of the existence of the external world reduces to absurdity in similar fashion. But with a difference. The statement "he has pains", if true, does not imply any philosophical proposition in itself.⁵⁵ (But if it could be false when it *faute de mieux* asserted something true, that *would* imply a philosophical proposition, a position outside Wittgenstein's language-games.) In Moore's philosophical scheme the basic proposition "here is a hand" *does* imply a philosophical proposition. In that sense it does not aspire to be a first-order (language-game) performance of truth-telling. But it does aspire to represent substantive philosophical realist truth. *Mutatis mutandis*, if it functioned as such, it would be possible for "here is a hand" to be false other than by it not existing. But this is impossible. Therefore it follows that 'The external world exists' does not make sense as a substantive realist truth.

To be sure, *PI* § 402 applies no less to a genuine empirical proposition such as, e.g., "The planet Saturn exists". It is equally appropriate to ask in what sense this statement could be false other than Saturn not existing. Yet genuine empirical

⁵⁴ Wittgenstein, *PI* § 402.

⁵⁵ In terms of *OC* § 52 "he has pains" is categorically the same as "At this distance from the sun there is a planet".

propositions have more *degrees of freedom* than Moore's common-sense propositions since they have a truth-outlet at the ordinary level of truth. And, as in the *Tractatus* such a level is a *non-philosophical* level; it is an empirical scientific level.

But ostensible philosophical propositions have no such access. Thus Wittgenstein is being entirely rhetorical when he asks why Moore doesn't cite as proof one of the things that he knows at the ordinary level:

Why doesn't Moore produce as one of the things he knows, for example, that in such-and-such a part of England there is a village called so-and-so? In other words, why doesn't he mention a fact that is known to him and not to every one of us?⁵⁶

In other words, he knows very well that Moore's answer would be that such proof at the ordinary level is irrelevant:

"Doubting the existence of the external world" does not mean for example

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, § 462. Thus Moore takes Descartes' metaphysical doubt behind the practical level to be answerable, and therefore on the same level as, propositions whose degree of certainty is self-evident, that is, propositions expressing simple obvious facts. It follows that R Fogelin's analysis of Wittgenstein's reading of Moore is incorrect. Speaking of *OC* § 19 he writes:

"Moore, at least as Wittgenstein reads him, supposes that philosophers often maintain (or hold positions that imply) propositions that are contrary to plain matters of fact. He rejects such philosophical claims on the grounds that anything that asserts or implies a falsehood is false. Wittgenstein replies that the idealist will not disagree with Moore at the level of common sense. He will hold instead that his denial or doubts come at quite another level. An idealist doubting whether material objects exist is nothing like a naturalist doubting whether the Ivory Billed Woodpecker still survives in the swamps of Louisiana. Moore's mistake is to suppose they are on the same level. Wittgenstein wishes to reject the idealist position as well but, unlike Moore, he sees that their doubts are second-order - or hyperbolic. Wittgenstein's position is that these second-order or hyperbolic doubts are illusions and a proper refutation or dissolution of idealism involves exposing these illusions." R Fogelin, "Wittgenstein and Classical Scepticism", in Shanker (ed), *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Critical Assessments*, vol ii, 170.

It is *true* that Moore takes his plain matters of fact to be on the same level as Descartes' second-order doubt - that we have already agreed. But it is *false* to say that he takes plain matters of fact to be on the same level as a naturalist doubting whether the Ivory Billed Woodpecker still survives in the swamps of Louisiana. Rather, he believes, rightly or wrongly, he is taking the plain matters of fact at the same level as Descartes' hyperbolic doubt. He accepts Descartes' doubt behind the practical doubt and operates with him at this level. Hence he is at one with Wittgenstein in seeing that Descartes' doubt is second-order. What he does *not* do, as Fogelin seems to think, is take Descartes at the level of practical doubt, at the level of the naturalist. Even though Moore thinks of the antecedent premises and the proved philosophical propositions as contingent propositions (von Wright "Wittgenstein on Certainty", 166-7 n.5), Fogelin overlooks the fact he works with a *bipartite* classification of propositions.

doubting the existence of a planet, which later observations prove to exist.
 - Or does Moore want to say that knowing here is his hand is different in kind from knowing the existence of the planet Saturn? Otherwise it would be possible to point out the discovery of the planet Saturn to the doubters and say that its existence has been proved, and hence the existence of the external world as well.⁵⁷

Thus if the realist gap is eliminated then not only do Moore's common sense propositions collapse to grammatical truths, as a corollary of this, the *philosopher's* concepts of proof and doubt (philosophical proof, philosophical doubt) are inappropriate (and indeed superfluous). There is no 'outside' - no truth-outlet - to supply the context that would make sense of such concepts. Not only is it the case that Moore and Descartes cannot find somewhere in language to say what they want to say, they can find no truth-level at which to pitch their respective claims. That is why Wittgenstein traces the source of Moore's (and Descartes') error to modelling so-called philosophical propositions on genuine empirical propositions:

For *this* is what disputes between idealists, [i.e.] Solipsists and Realists look like. The one party attack the normal form of expression as if they were attacking a statement; the others defend it, as if they were stating facts known to every

⁵⁷ Wittgenstein, *OC* § 20. The argument pursued here implicitly sides with McGinn against Stroud (and Fogelin). Stroud argues that Moore's position amounts to a "refusal or inability to take his own or anyone else's words in that elusive 'external' or 'philosophical' way He steadfastly remains within the familiar, unproblematic understanding of those general questions and assertions with which the philosopher would attempt to bring all of our knowledge of the world into question. He resists, or more probably does not even feel, the pressure towards the philosophical project as it is understood by the philosophers he discusses." Stroud, *The Significance of Philosophical Scepticism* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1984), 119. Ordinary practice is thus insulated from scepticism; philosophy and ordinary practice constitute two distinct and non-intersecting domains of discourse. Stroud concludes that "what Moore says, understood as he means it, is completely acceptable. If it nevertheless seems completely irrelevant to the philosophical questions and does not refute the paradoxical conclusions philosophers reach, that is a very important fact about these philosophical questions and conclusions." *Ibid*, 120. According to McGinn Stroud holds two insulation doctrines, a weak and a strong version. The weak version is that the truth of the sceptical conclusion is compatible with the 'correctness' of our ordinary language claims. The strong version is that the truth of the sceptic's conclusion is compatible with the truth of our ordinary knowledge-claims. McGinn, *Sense and Certainty*, 30. Against Stroud McGinn argues not only that Moore intended his assertions to be taken on the philosophical level, (*Ibid*, 45), but also that they can and should be taken that way: "Moore's response to the sceptic is only properly understood in the light of his acceptance of, on the one hand, the two assumptions that I have taken as the frame of my discussion of scepticism, namely that it is both unanswerable and unliveable, and on the other, of the view, which I also share, that the sceptic's conclusion is in outright conflict with our common-sense conviction that we really do know a mass of facts." *Ibid*, 48-9. Again, "Moore's proof is satisfactory as a philosophical response to the sceptic." *Ibid*, 50.

reasonable human being.⁵⁸

In other words, Descartes the idealist attacks "I know this is a hand", "This hand here exists" as if he were attacking "The planet Saturn exists" (albeit at a different more fundamental level) from the plane of the external perspective. Realists are guilty of the opposite mistake: Moore, for example, defends "I know this is a hand", "This hand here exists", as if he were stating propositions known to every reasonable person (as at *OC* § 20) ("The planet Saturn exists").

Instead of simply begging the question against classical epistemology, Wittgenstein's position is that classical epistemology is unable to affirm what it wants to affirm. What remains is a description of the use of words in use at the moment of utterance. Though the sequence of words is the same, Moore's "Here is a hand" collapses to "Here is (what I call) 'a hand'", as in the Jastrow duck-rabbit figure. Substantive truth collapses to grammatical truth. All that remains is Wittgenstein's 'philosophical' realm of forms of life and language-games.⁵⁹

This means that the classical philosophical epistemological theses cannot but be reduced and resolved to grammatical propositions. Thus Wittgenstein writes:

Now might not "*I know*, I am not just surmising, that here is my hand" be conceived as a proposition of grammar? Hence *not* temporally.

But in that case isn't it like this one: "I know, I am not just surmising, that I am seeing red"?

And isn't the consequence "So there are physical objects" like: "So there are colours"?⁶⁰

In other words, as in the case of Moore's common sense propositions, claims to knowledge of common sense propositions collapse to grammatical truths. Thus to say I know here is my hand is to say nothing more than that one knows how to use the word "hand". That is why Wittgenstein says that it is not used temporally, which is to say, self-enclosed in a semantic realm, it is cut off from the stream of

⁵⁸ Wittgenstein, *PI* § 402. It is to be noted that in referring to "reasonable human beings" Wittgenstein makes a connection with the reasonable man at *OC* § 19 - one more reason for continuing the argument being pursued here through *PI* § 402.

⁵⁹ Wittgenstein, *PI* § 115.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, § 57.

life.⁶¹

If "I know, etc." is conceived as a grammatical proposition, of course the "I" cannot be important. And it properly means "There is no such thing as a doubt in this case" or "The expression 'I do not know' makes no sense in this case". And of course it follows from this that "I know" makes no sense either.⁶²

And Wittgenstein concludes:

"I know" is here a *logical* insight. Only realism cannot be proved by means of it.⁶³

Epistemological realism, like ontological realism, collapses to grammatical truths.

IX. Barth: The Grammatical *A Posteriori* in the Wake of the Collapse of Realism.

In *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* 'That than which is a greater cannot be conceived' is a revealed Name. That means it is dependent on revelation - and is not, as in the traditional interpretation, an *a priori* conception. Thus Barth appears vulnerable to the charge that one has to assume (the existence of) the revelation which collapses the realist gap. Similarly, faith described in terms of its object - faith described in terms of its *object* - appears vulnerable to the same charge. At minimum, a residue of realism appears unavoidable, uneliminable.

But now it is time for the analytic *a posteriori* to make its entrance. "If Kant's philosophical question is, How are synthetic *a priori* judgements possible, is Barth's theological question, How are analytic *a posteriori* judgements possible?"⁶⁴ Notwithstanding the inadmissible emphasis on the transcendental

⁶¹ In *Zettel*, he draws many images from German life philosophy about the stream or flow (*Strom* or *Fluss*) of life. Wittgenstein, Z § 28, § 107, § 173, § 459.

⁶² Wittgenstein *OC* § 58.

⁶³ *Ibid*, § 59.

⁶⁴ J McLelland, "Philosophy and Theology - A Family Affair (Karl and Heinrich Barth)", in H Martin Rumscheidt (ed), *Footnotes to a Theology: The Karl Barth Colloquium of 1972* Sciences Religieuses Supplements, 1974, 30-52. 34. Notwithstanding the fact that McLelland emphasises Barth's relationship to the Kantian rather than the Humean problematic, *pace* von Balthasar, this short densely written essay written over twenty years ago remains unsurpassed in the perceptiveness of its comments on Barth's intellectual relationship to the history of ideas of modern philosophical

question as *the* theological question in Barth (where it is *the* philosophical question in Kant), the grammatical truth implicit in faith described in terms of its object closely resembles an analytic *a posteriori* proposition, though it would be more accurate to term it a grammatical *a posteriori* truth.

That realism collapses to a grammatical truth that is also *a posteriori* is a paradox Barth resolves through Hegelian-style *Aufhebung*, preserving in each only what is rational relative to the other and cancelling what is inconsistent in each relative to the other.

The nature of such truths puzzled Wittgenstein in *On Certainty*. "There are physical objects" (or "The external world exists") takes the form of a contingent proposition since it appears to assert something that might have been false: there might not have been physical objects. Hence he is moved to write:

But can't it be imagined that there are no physical objects? I don't know.
And yet "There are physical objects" is nonsense. Is it supposed to be an empirical proposition?⁶⁵

As Wittgenstein saw it, the spectre of the empirical proposition threatened to break into *sui generis* philosophy; in other words, the realism appropriate to ordinary empirical objects, the realism proper to the domain of science (hence to non-philosophy) threatened to break into the philosophical sphere. Just as it can be imagined that the planet Saturn might not have existed, it can be similarly imagined that the external world might not have existed. Nevertheless, it does not follow that the latter is an empirical proposition.

What philosophers such as Moore attempt to say but can't - that the external

thought. Nevertheless, McLelland defines "analytic *a posteriori*" merely in terms of an *analysis* - an analytic of - how the actual is possible and necessary. *Ibid*, 38. Barth's analytic is a genuine analytic (grammatical) proposition that is also *a posteriori*. This does not appear to be what was envisaged by McLelland.

⁶⁵ Wittgenstein, *OC* § 35. The next and final sentence of *OC* § 35 is intended to dispel this apparent paradox inherent in the two juxtaposed positions. It is a sort of *coup de grace* delivered in a new paragraph and it goes:

"And is this an empirical proposition: 'There seem to be physical objects'?"
That is, 'There seem to be physical objects' also appears to be an empirical proposition but, as we know, as Descartes uses it, it isn't: in Descartes' scheme it cannot be doubted. Hence the Cartesian sceptic is forced to acknowledge that although 'There are physical objects' appears to be an empirical proposition it doesn't follow that it is.

world exists - can be shown. What philosophers such as Descartes attempt to say but can't, cannot be shown. There is an asymmetry. This insight is in fact hung over *On Certainty* like a sign over a door-way indicating the contents inside: *OC* § 7 is in its own way programmatic for what it is that Wittgenstein is at pains to say throughout the book:

My life shows that I know or am certain that there is a chair over there or a door, and so on. - I tell a friend "Take that chair over there", "Shut the door" etc. etc.⁶⁶

But it doesn't then follow that realism (saying) is true in the sense that one can ask if the chair exists as one can of the planet Saturn.⁶⁷ The bipartite classification remains in force: the latter remains an empirical problem and the former a philosophical problem. To be sure, the chair might not have existed but this *a posteriori* judgement is itself necessarily *post facto* the dissolution of realism.

In other words, Wittgenstein's *On Certainty* specifically (and the later philosophy in general) is a story in which the human being can only encounter the philosophical realm *in medias res*. That is, we can only encounter it in the middle of the encounter itself. That is the rationale behind the *a posteriori* necessarily conjoined to an analytic truth, a grammatical truth. Like the opening of Dante's *Inferno* where the narrator wakes to find himself in the middle of a wood, Wittgenstein's *dramatis persona* in *On Certainty* wakes the traditional philosopher

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, § 7 (i) My life shows: *Mein Leben zeigt*. The *Leben* Wittgenstein means is the one expressed in a *Lebensform*, (*Wittgenstein*, *PI* § 23) Note what it is about *mein leben* that shows: "Take that chair over there", "Shut the door" etc. - i.e., in the later philosophy it is language, orders, requests, etc (*Ibid*, § 23). And language takes place within a form of life: "And to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life." *Ibid*, § 19. (ii) My life shows what? It shows that I am certain - I know - there is a chair over there or a door. Descartes, on the other hand, claims that I don't know these things - the chair over there may be a product of a dream or an illusion created by some evil demon. At most all we can claim is that there seems to be a chair, a door, etc. (iii) But what my life shows cannot be said. Wittgenstein's conceptual conclusion has been to serve notice on the sense of Moore's claim: That I know here is one hand is neither true nor false but nonsense. The proposition 'There are physical objects' is also nonsense.

⁶⁷ Thus Wittgenstein assimilates the showing and saying distinction in *On Certainty* to the distinction as it occurs in the *Tractatus*: "Am I not getting closer and closer to saying that in the end logic cannot be described? You must look at the practice of language, then you will see it." *Ibid*, § 501. Kenny notes that § 501 is "an unmistakable echo of the first entry in his 1914 notebook: Logic must take care of itself. (NB 2)" Kenny, *Wittgenstein*, 218.

from his philosopher's dream to encounter the world *in medias res*. In Dante there is no linguistic overture, no superior narrative overseeing and setting the scene, no statement "Once there was a dark wood" There is either being in the middle of it or nothing. Similarly, in Wittgenstein there is no sense in which "There is an external world" (true or false) can be logically prior to being in the middle of it. As Fergus Kerr puts it, forms of life and language-games "cannot be explored or explained any more deeply because [they are] the foundation of every kind of exploration and explanation. If you like: the given cannot be discovered except by showing how it makes possible all that we do and suffer. I discover myself, not in some pre-linguistic inner space of self-presence, but in the network of multifarious social and historical relationships in which I am willy-nilly involved."⁶⁸

Historically, it was Barth who, in pushing the Enlightenment-Hegel dialectic to a new synthesis,⁶⁹ developed a theological epistemology of the analytic *a posteriori*, and added a genuinely new chapter to the history of theology. To be sure, in Barth, prototypical revelation is the analytic *a posteriori* truth that might not have existed. Thus the encounter is seen *post facto* to take place in space and time - though not as *Historie* but as *Geschichte*.⁷⁰ But faith described in terms of its object means that the prototypical witnesses encounter the object of faith in the middle of the encounter itself - the actual only in the middle of the actual itself.⁷¹

⁶⁸ F Kerr, *Theology After Wittgenstein* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986), 69. Thus to say that forms of life cannot be explored any further is to say that "Do forms of life exist?" is not a valid philosophical question.

⁶⁹ See chapter 2, 43-44.

⁷⁰ "We should be guilty of a fundamental misunderstanding of the whole New Testament message if, because the history of the resurrection is not history [*Historie*] in this sense, we try to interpret it as if it had never happened at all, or not happened in space and time in the same way as the death of Jesus Christ. [...] Even accounts which by the standards of modern scholarship have to be accounted saga or legend and not history [*unhistorisch*] - because their content cannot be grasped historically - may still speak of a happening which, though it cannot be grasped historically, is still actual and objective [*wirklichen*]." Barth, *CD IV/1*, 336. Thus it is not *Historie* but *Geschichte* which takes place in space and time (it is *Geschichte* that the Gospel narrative recounts). *Ibid*, 336.

⁷¹ The dialectic in *Romans II* is between God (eternity) and man (time), between eternity and time (historicism and psychologism). Insofar as there is a dialectic in the post-*Fides Quaerens Intellectum* theology, that dialectic is an *in medias res*-time dialectic, an *in medias res*-historicism/psychologism dialectic. As in *Romans II*, this dialectic is a supplementary not a

Given prototypicality, this means that *we* can only encounter the object of faith in the middle of the encounter itself. The tension between realism and nonsense is present in Barth in the same measure as in Wittgenstein: if assimilating prototypical revelation straightforwardly to the form and content of a substantive truth is valid, it must be the case that it is possible for it not to take place other than it not taking place. In other words, if *saying* is valid then it must be possible for prototypical revelation not to take place other than it not taking place: that is the nature of prototypical revelation. *Ergo*, saying collapses to showing. That is the position prototypical revelation puts the prototypical witness in, and by extension, the Christian Church. To find a space between empirical (historical) epistemological realism and philosophical epistemological realism is the historical task of finding a space for *sui generis* theology. Confronted with theological truth, the external perspective (non-theology, realism) collapses to grammatical truth.

But if there is no philosophical level, that still leaves the ordinary level of truth. To be sure, as the case of *PI* § 402, such logic (grammar) applies no less to any genuine empirical proposition. It is equally appropriate to ask in what sense an empirical (i.e., non-analytic) statement could be false other than what it is the statement is about not existing. But again, genuine empirical propositions have more *degrees of freedom* than the basic propositions (theological realist statements comparable to Moore's common sense propositions) espoused by the Reformed epistemologist since the former have a truth-outlet at the ordinary level of truth. But, as in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* where this truth-outlet is a non-philosophical level, in Barth it is a *non-theological* level, an empirical scientific level.

The foundationalist propositions have no such access. That is why in the context of the interface of the theological realm, the Reformed epistemologist reproduces the faulty grammar of Moore. He attempts to "state facts known to every

complementary dialectic (see McCormack, "Scholastic", 169). In the sense that analogy is dialectically conditioned (*Ibid*, 13) then it makes more sense, given prototypicality, to say that it is *post*-dialectical, the scope of analogy operating within faith (analogically) described in terms of its object. Nevertheless, though it is more accurate to say that Barth remained a dialectical theologian all his life rather than turned from dialectic to analogy (*Ibid*, 385), *sui generis* theological truth provides a more fundamental clarification of Barth than dialectic, even in the case of *Romans* II.

reasonable human being" (realism), when unbeknown to him the proposition "God exists" has collapsed to a grammatical truth. Thus Barth's instincts for what it is he wants to say with faith described in terms of its object emerge in concentrated form in the following passage:

It is quite essential to this human position of the knowledge of God bound to the knowledge of God that it cannot let its reality or possibility be questioned from without, that it can reply only by a reference to its fulfilment [*nur mit dem Hinweis auf ihren Vollzug*] or rather only by the fulfilment itself, allowing the actuality to speak for itself [*oder vielmehr nur mit ihrem Vollzug selbst antworten, das sie nach aussen nur ihre eigene Tatsachlichkeit fur sich selber sprechen lassen kann*].⁷²

Realism allocates the resources of logical space to both realist statement and fact; reference is conjoined to realism.⁷³ In Barth there is no room in logical space for realist statement; in Barth realist reference is edged out, excluded from logical space; realist reference *gives way* to Barth's concept of revelation in the sense that the actuality speaks for itself. And actuality speaking for itself means that saying collapses to showing and substantive truth - within the realm of faith described in terms of its object - collapses to grammatical truth. Indeed, realism is excluded *because* such reference as there is collapses to grammatical truth. At best it is an explanation of *what words mean*. Thus Barth prophetically opens *CD II/1* with the statement that

in the doctrine of God we learn how to use the word 'God'.⁷⁴

And since Barth's doctrine of God is "utterly and absolutely" Christocentric, in the doctrine of Jesus Christ (God) - in the face of prototypical revelation - we learn how to use the word 'Jesus Christ' ('God'). That is all we do (and can do): what, according to the strictest Barthian logic, we do not do (and cannot do) is: learn that *God exists*, although that this is so, is shown.

In the position bound to the interface of the theological realm, "know" is, as in Wittgenstein, a *logical* insight. Thus at the beginning of *II/1* Barth writes:

⁷² Barth, *CD II/1*, 30.

⁷³ This is a feature of Hunsinger, *How To Read Karl Barth. The Shape of His Theology* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1991).

⁷⁴ Barth, *CD II/1*, 3.

It is not a question whether God is actually known

And:

... because knowledge of God cannot call itself into question in its effort to understand itself, it cannot ask itself whether it is real [*wirklich*] from some position outside itself. [This] question can only be put to it from the Word of God [Jesus Christ]. And from the Word of God this question is in fact put to it. And it is also given the answer there. But it will not want to be set under the Word of God just in order to make its own existence problematical. It is made problematical by the Word of God, but thanks to that same Word it need not fear that it will be made problematical anywhere else. [...] For in the Word of God it is decided that the knowledge of God cannot let itself be called into question, or call itself into question, from any other position outside itself. The Word of God will not let itself be moved from its own place into another It must refuse to let its reality be debated from any position, and must start out by establishing its own reality ... it cannot retreat from its own reality. Therefore we cannot ask whether God is known.⁷⁵

But has Barth really answered the charge that one has to assume (the existence of) the revelation that collapses the realist gap? Insofar as he has shown that the charge is unintelligible the answer is, yes. The realist gap eliminated, there is no sense in which one can step outside and ask (in a second-order sense) "Did the revelation collapsing the realist gap happen?" The reason is that there is no 'outside' to step 'into'. Since revelation collapses the realist gap, it is not possible to speak of a realist revelation that collapses realism. To be able to do so would be to reinstate the very realist gap that has been eliminated. To do so would mean that 'we could say what an unlogical world looked like.' There is only (in theology) the interface to the theological realm.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 4. It is clear that Barth's metatheological thesis on the knowability of God follows from his metatheological thesis on the reality of the knowledge of God: "Where God is known he is also in some way or other knowable. Where the actuality exists there is also the corresponding possibility. The question cannot then be posed *in abstracto* but only *in concreto*; not *a priori* but only *a posteriori*. The *in abstracto* and *a priori* question of the possibility of the knowledge of God obviously presupposes the existence of a place outside the knowledge of God itself from which this knowledge can be judged. It presupposes a place where, no doubt, the possibility of knowledge in general and then the knowledge of God in particular can be judged in one way or another. It presupposes the existence of a theory of knowledge as a hinterland where consideration of the truth, worth, and competence of the Word of God can at least for a time be suspended." *Ibid*, 5. Later on Barth writes: "... the knowability of God cannot be questioned *in vacuo*, or by means of a general criterion of knowledge delimiting the knowledge of God from without, but only from within this real knowledge itself." *Ibid*, 5.

X. The Realist Gap Eliminated, There is no Apologetic Territory into which the Philosopher's Concept of Proof Can Advance.

In *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, the traditional philosopher is confronted with the presence of 'that than which a greater cannot be conceived'. In such a situation he cannot think "God does not exist".⁷⁶ Herein lies the fundamental reason for distinguishing Barth's interpretation of Anselm from standard realist interpretations. In *On Certainty* Wittgenstein effectively rejects Moore and Descartes' claim that they can think - assert *meaningfully* - "Physical objects do not exist". That is the import of his argument, not merely that the statement is false (Descartes is looking at a table so what he says is false), but that it does not make sense. Similarly, Barth's 'analytic' *a posteriori* interpretation derives that "God does not exist" is analytically false. Accordingly, it follows that "God exists" is analytically true (in the context of the presence of 'that than which a greater cannot be conceived').⁷⁷

Were Barth's interpretation of Anselm a realist interpretation, it could be argued with some justification that all he has done is beg the very question at issue, namely God's existence. He has asked the traditional philosopher to assume revelation, the presence of God, at the outset. But Barth contrasts, on the one hand, a revelation that affirms the symmetrical principle of truth of the traditional philosopher's external perspective, and, by implication, the realist gap, and, on the other, a revelation that repudiates the external perspective and collapses the realist gap altogether (and saying to showing and to grammatical truth). In *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* Barth presents us with the latter.

⁷⁶ Barth, *FQI*, 166. In revelation we are confronted with, and are therefore *in* the presence of, 'that than which a greater cannot be conceived'. For Barth this is a crucial departure from the traditional interpretation. For the latter, that God is 'that than which a greater cannot be conceived' is an *a priori* conception. Therefore it is not necessary that "God does not exist" be a meaningless statement in the presence of revelation. For Barth it is, since to know God is to be in the presence of revelation. See *Ibid*, 75.

⁷⁷ "In *Pros. 2-4* Anselm wants to prove the existence of God. He proves it by assuming a Name of God the meaning of which implies that the statement 'God exists' is necessary (that means that the statement 'God does not exist' is impossible." *Ibid*, 73. Both statements are analytic statements. In the context of 'that than which a greater cannot be conceived', necessary statements are *de dicto* statements; and *de dicto* necessary statements are analytic statements. In the context of 'that than which a greater cannot be conceived', impossible statements are *de dicto* statements; and *de dicto* impossible statements are analytically false statements.

Consequently, in *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* there is, as in Wittgenstein, no logical space for *proof*, in particular, no logical space for a *philosophical proposition-proving* scheme: prototypically, neither believing or unbelieving historicism (i.e., believing or unbelieving non-theology); typically, neither believing or unbelieving empirical philosophy. To restate verbatim an earlier point: to find a space between empirical (historical) epistemological realism and philosophical epistemological realism is the historical task of finding a space for *sui generis* theology. It is this space that Barth reclaims (the logical space Wittgenstein proved existed) as the arena in which *sui generis* theological epistemology takes place (though without its repercussions being confined to that space). *Contra* the Torrance-Phillips thesis that theology (and philosophy) operate with, and discover (*pari passu*), *sui generis* procedures of proof and verification, Barth and Wittgenstein focus on only a single concept, the traditional philosopher's concept of proof (and of doubt), and this in order to *eliminate* it. What Barth in particular attempts to show is that the external perspective's concept of proof (and of doubt) makes no sense at the interface of the theological realm.

That the 'ratiocinative activity' at the theological realm shows that it does not makes sense to prove (or doubt) the philosophical proposition 'God exists' is a corollary of the commitment to an 'analytic' (grammatical) *a posteriori* position. Indeed, Barth opposes a 'Hegelian' presence to Kant's (realist) 'ontological' interpretation in *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Barth's first significant encounter with the thought of St Anselm occurred in 1926 when he arranged a seminar on *Cur Deus Homo?*. Barth at the time was to say revealingly, "'Somehow', he is certainly right." Busch, *Barth*, 169. His second and decisive encounter with Anselm's thought came in the Summer of 1930 when he again held a seminar on Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo?*, this time in Bonn. Barth recalled later that the lecture by his philosopher friend Heinrich Scholz on the proof for the existence of God in Anselm's *Proslogion* "aroused in me a compelling urge to deal with Anselm quite differently from hitherto." *Ibid*, 205. During the following year Barth studied Anselm's thought intensively and in 1931 *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* was published. Yet for all Barth's enthusiasm, it cannot really have been Scholz's lecture on Anselm's *Proslogion* which inspired him to read Anselm as he did in *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*. Scholz read Anselm philosophically, not theologically, and considered *Proslogion* 2 as the fundamental *Proslogion* argument. Barth on the other hand was adamant that it was *Proslogion* 3. C Hartshorne, backing Barth's interpretation on this point as against Scholz's, finds Scholz's "oversight ... especially remarkable in that he refers to Barth who was not guilty of it." C Hartshorne, *Anselm's Discovery. A Re-examination of the Ontological Proof For God's Existence* (La Salle, Illinois, Open Court, 1965), 283. Scholz then is not a good candidate. Whether it was Barth's reading of Hegel which predisposed Barth to interpret,

Speaking of Anselm's personal *credo* and the objective *Credo* of the Church Barth comments:

As *credere* of the *Credo*, faith is itself, so to speak, an *intelligere*, distinguished from the *intelligere* only in kind.⁷⁹

Intelligere coincides with the 'outward proof'. Prayer, the *sui generis* condition of theology is logically conjoined to the confines of the theological realm. How does Barth's Anselm bring them together? Barth points out that the form of explicit address to God is not for Anselm a mere literary pattern entirely contingent to *Proslogion* 2-4; on the contrary, it is, he asserts, intrinsic to the proof and integral to Anselm's attitude manifested in it:

When his *Monologion* lay finished before him Anselm felt compelled to work through for a second time what was essentially the same material - the Doctrine of God in the narrower sense - in the form of the *Proslogion*, that is, in the form of an explicit address to God. But even this form did not become a literary pattern. In *Cur Deus Homo?* we see him making use of the dialogue pattern between teacher and pupil. In *De Concordia*, one of his later works, a tendency can be noted toward the method of the *Quaestiones*, which became characteristic of later Scholasticism. And all his life in the *Meditationes* he developed, as an alternative to the invocation form of the *Proslogion*, the monologue of the soul on the things of God and man. For this reason it must not be overlooked that in the form of the *Proslogion* an attitude manifests itself whose significance for his whole inquiry transcends matters of style and indeed things human.⁸⁰

Precisely in what sense the *sui generis* theological condition transcends matters of style and indeed "things human" - things non-theological - reveals itself in a footnote Barth appends to the final sentence in the above paragraph. In it he quotes with whole-hearted approval the statement of another theologian. The complete quotation reads:

or misinterpret Anselm in 1931, in his own way - and against the classical interpretation - surely merits further study. To be sure, Kant's commitment to demonstrating the invalidity of the proof follows very simply from his conception of God as noumenon i.e., outside the world-as-appearance, outside the world as phenomenon. God is outside or beyond the limits of reason, from which it follows that any rational proof of God's existence is doomed to failure from the start. Herein lies the motivation behind his famous '100 Thalers' objection to Anselm's proof. But Hegel's claim for Speculative Reason unites the phenomenon and the noumenon, thought and being. And Barth, following Hegel's solution to Kant, re-unifies thought and being at the locus of revelation, shifting the hermeneutical balance away from man (as in Kant's interpretation) towards God (towards the theological realm).

⁷⁹ Barth, *FQI*, 24.

⁸⁰ Barth, *FQI*, 36.

We are well able to listen to the enchanted language of such passages [the *Proslogion*] now that the Enlightenment has been disposed of by Herder, classicism and romanticism. But even to-day this kind of thing is taken as a purely subjective result of feeling, whereas that of logical succession is taken as an entirely objective product of the intellect and so any real understanding of either is prevented by this wedge that is driven between them right at the start. - This objection of W. Von den Steinen (*Vom Heiligen Geist des Mittelalters*, 1926, pp36f) is only too true.⁸¹

In other words, the *sui generis* condition of theology - accepting in practice the existence of the One whose existence he undertakes to think out and prove, presupposing in the most positive manner conceivable the presence of the object of faith - is not to be thought of as a *purely* subjective result of feeling, nor the 'logical succession' component of the proof as an *entirely* objective product of the intellect. Instead, they coincide at the interface of the theological realm, revelation, though without vindicating the traditional philosopher's concept of proof.

In the Introduction to *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* Barth writes:

What has to be said in explanation of the Proof will only make sense if we may assume a firm grasp of what 'to prove' means in Anselm generally.⁸²

Barth goes on:

Too much has been said about this proof, for and against it, without there being any real appreciation of what Anselm was trying to do, and in fact doing, when he explained 'was proving' and when he justified this particular proof. What is set out in *Pros.* 2-4 is first described as a 'proof' (*probare, probatio*) by Anselm's opponent Gaunilo, but this designation is also adopted by Anselm himself. this concept can be found elsewhere in Anselm but always in passages where he is speaking of a definite result that his work has actually produced or is expected to produce. Anselm is bent on this result and strives to achieve it. But in point of fact his own particular description of what he is doing is not *probare* at all but *intelligere*. As *intelligere* it issues in *probare*.⁸³

The last sentence brings us to the crux of the matter. According to Barth, whatever evidence there is to the contrary, Anselm does not *prove* the existence of God, if by

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 36, n.1. Indeed, the footnote encapsulates Barth's opposition to Schleiermacher's theology. Schleiermacher is trapped, as Barth would have it, inside the category of feeling. Faith, rendered helpless by the Kantian strictures on theological epistemology, is unable to break out from the subjective into the objective. This means that faith described in terms of its object is part of Barth's revolution *vis-à-vis* Schleiermacher.

⁸² *Ibid*, 14.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 14.

prove we understand the manner in which the classical proofs prove the existence of God. Rather, what he desires is an *understanding* of the question of the existence of God.⁸⁴ *Probare* only occurs in the sense in which *intelligere* occurs. This and only this is the sense in which Anselm 'proves'. This is corroborated by another statement:

Fundamentally, the *quaerens intellectum* is really immanent in *fides*. Therefore it is not a question of faith 'requiring' the 'proof' There is absolutely no question at all of a requirement of faith. Anselm wants 'proof'... because he wants *intelligere* and he wants *intelligere* because he believes. Any reversal of this order of compulsion is excluded by Anselm's conception of faith.⁸⁵

The difference posited by Barth, between, on the one hand, his interpretation of Anselm and, on the other, the traditional interpretation is not simply one of degree. It is not merely that, where the traditional interpretation reads Anselm as deriving a positive conclusion, Barth has him deriving a negative conclusion - the impossibility of God existing *solo intellectu* (*Pros.* 2) or the impossibility of conceiving God as not existing (*Pros.* 3). To be sure, speaking of *Pros.* 2 in particular (and 2.1 specifically)⁸⁶ he asserts:

⁸⁴ It is intrinsic to the later philosophy that no philosophical propositions are derived; description does not lead deductively to philosophical propositions (description cannot fulfil the role of an explanation moving such propositions); philosophy does not have a hypothetico-deductive structure (like science):

"Here we come up against a remarkable and characteristic phenomenon in philosophical investigation: the difficulty - I might say - is not that of finding the solution but rather that of recognising as the solution something that looks as if it were only a preliminary to it. 'We have already said everything. - Not anything that follows from this, no, this itself is the solution!' This is connected, I believe, with our wrongly expecting an explanation, whereas the solution of the difficulty is a description, if we give it the right place in our considerations. If we dwell upon it, and do not try to get beyond it. The difficulty here is: to stop" Wittgenstein, *Z* § 314.

The resolution of the problem is the description itself:

"Philosophy simply puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything." Wittgenstein, *PI* § 126.

Again:

"In philosophy we do not draw conclusions. 'But it must be like this!' is not a philosophical proposition." *Ibid*, § 599.

⁸⁵ Barth, *FQI*, 16-17.

⁸⁶ The numbers 2.1, 2.2, etc., designate the stages of Anselm's proof as numbered in the appendix of this thesis.

This statement declares what is now to be proved (in sharp contrast to what resulted from the premise) - the impossibility of an existence of God only within knowledge; that means the necessity of his objective, his actual existence.⁸⁷

And of *Pros.* 3 he asserts:

And so Anselm, who has proved that it is impossible for him who is called *quo maius cogitari nequit* not to exist, can say with a clear conscience that he has proved it is impossible for God not to exist.⁸⁸

Again:

And so in fact ... the Existence of God is confirmed when it is proved that God cannot be conceived as not existing.⁸⁹

The view that Barth's only concern is to convert a positive conclusion into a negative conclusion begs a very important question.⁹⁰ Why, if a positive statement is the conclusion of an apologetic scheme, should a negative statement be the conclusion (or a conclusion) of a non-apologetic scheme such as *fides quaerens intellectum*? Conversely, if a negative statement qualifies as an appropriate conclusion for a non-apologetic scheme, why shouldn't a positive statement qualify too? Why shouldn't a positive statement be the conclusion of *fides quaerens intellectum*?

By paying close exegetical attention to Barth's commentary on *Pros.* 2-3, it

⁸⁷ Barth, *FQI*, 123. Barth does not mean that the latter clause is *derived* from the preceding one. The latter is logically subsumed, not deductively implied, in the former.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 154.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 156.

⁹⁰ Von Balthasar asserts:

"[Barth's] definitive position is first spelled out in his analysis of Anselm's *Proslogion*. [...] *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* is Anselm's starting point. When a believer utters the name of God he utters it within the context of his encounter with God The context of encounter makes this problem different from any other. We cannot utter the word 'God' in this context and then conclude that he does not really exist." von Balthasar, *Barth*, 134.

But then von Balthasar goes on to say:

"The ultimate conclusion of a proof of God's existence is a negative one: a purely notional God is a manifest impossibility. Only on the basis of revelation can we make a positive unassailable affirmation of his existence" *Ibid*, 135.

The shortcoming of von Balthasar's critique is the lack of an explanation as to why the ultimate conclusion of a proof of God's existence should be a negative one. We are given no reason to suppose that the ultimate conclusion could not just as easily be a positive one. In other words, under von Balthasar's interpretation there is no explanation why on the basis of revelation we cannot derive, within the context of the proof, the positive proposition 'God exists'.

can be deduced that he believed Anselm's proof worked in the following way. Anselm had eliminated the realist gap leaving behind the analogue of a grammatical proposition. This meant there was no truth out-let outside of revelation. But if there was no such outside (or beyond or behind) then there was no logical space into which the traditional interpretation could proceed with the proof (with the derived proposition: *ergo* God exists). There was no such territory. That is why for Barth the proof proper reaches so far but no further. That is why he contains the proof to the theological realm. The realist gap eliminated there was no traditional concept of proof to satisfy. Consequently it didn't make sense to talk of proof.⁹¹

But to derive the (philosophical) proposition 'God exists' is to reinstate the traditional philosopher's concept of proof (and the realist gap). Therefore Barth cannot allow that Anselm's proof derives the proposition 'God exists'.

Where the traditional interpretation has Anselm's proof terminating at the point where the positive conclusion 'God exists' is derived, for Barth it terminates a stage earlier, when the proof proper reaches a negative conclusion.

In order to justify this interpretation Barth concentrates all his efforts on an "exact" exegesis that "investigates every word".⁹² "Investigating every word" - this is how Barth intends to overturn the traditional interpretation. The implicit conclusion must be that the traditional interpretation fails to do this. Unfortunately, what quickly becomes evident is the weakness of Barth's case. Yet that he strove to make it at all was testimony to how very important it is to him that Anselm's proof did not derive the positive conclusion 'God exists'.

⁹¹ Thus at *Pros.* 4 Barth asserts that the fool's statement "God does not exist" is due to the fact he is standing on another plane, one which from the plane of the theological realm is logically demonstrated not to exist. That is the real reason why to stand on it is *folly* [*die Torheit*]:

"The assertion and the denial of the Existence of God do not take place - here we have the fundamental solution to the problem - on the same plane [*auf derselben Ebene*] at all. The fool is able to say what he is certainly unable to conceive in so far as when he says it he is standing on a plane where he can assert the non-existence of God. And he is unable to conceive of what he is nevertheless able to say in so far as he is standing on another plane where it would be impossible for him to assert the non-existence of God. This is the fool's basic folly that in his thinking he is standing on a plane where the assertion of God's non-existence is certainly possible but where to stand on that plane is in itself - folly." *Ibid*, 163.

⁹² *Ibid*, 8.

(i) It is clearly important to Barth how 2.5 - traditionally taken to be the conclusion of the proof - is to be interpreted. Barth goes back to 'first principles': his initial remark on 2.5 focuses on how Anselm's Latin is to be translated:

To understand this conclusion we must not simply grasp the first German translation which comes our way: 'there does therefore undoubtedly exist something' Despite the fact that *existit* is placed first, it follows from the whole context of the chapter that the emphasis of the sentence is not on this *existit* which is itself ambiguous, but on what explains it - *et intellectu et in re*. Not till then does the *existit* become unambiguous in the sense of the desired result.⁹³

Barth objects to beginning a translation of 2.5 with 'There does therefore undoubtedly exist something' In a footnote on the same page he criticises various translations - one German and two French for doing just this:

Thus J Brinktrine in his translation of the *Proslogion* into German in Ferdinand Schöningh's *Sammlung philosophischer Lesestoffe*, Paderborn, n.d.) - not a work of any significance. The translation of H Bouchitte is quite arbitrary and misleading (*Le rationalisme chrétien à la fin du XI siècle*, Paris 1842, p247): *Il existe donc certainement un être audessus duquel on ne peut rien imaginer, ni dans le pensée ni dans le fait*. Better, but not entirely unambiguous because of the absence of quotation marks which are quite indispensable here. A Koyre: *Par conséquent il n'ya a aucun doute, que quelque chose dont on ne peut rien concevoir de plus grand existe et dans l'intelligence et dans la réalité*.⁹⁴

What is Barth's own translation? It begins with 'Thus objectively as well as in knowledge' and follows with 'there does undoubtedly exist 'something' He implicitly justifies this reading by pointing out that *existit* is not unambiguous until we reach - *et intellectu et in re*. In other words, according to Barth any translation which allows one to read the sentence from beginning to end without ambiguity is a superior one. There is no question that this is an eccentric criterion invented by Barth to suit his own ends. It is pertinent to cite some reliable English translations which, according to Barth's criterion, are inferior. They are standard classical readings. Jasper Hopkins translates it: "*Hence* [my italics] without doubt, something than which a greater cannot be thought exists both in the understanding and in

⁹³ *Ibid*, 127.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 127, n.2. Note Barth's criticism of Koyre on the grounds of his omitting quotation marks. Koyre's error in this respect is that his translation suppresses the fact that Anselm speaks about God while speaking to Him (using God's revealed name).

reality."⁹⁵ N J Charlesworth translates it: "*Therefore* [my italics] there is absolutely no doubt that something-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought exists both in the mind and in reality."⁹⁶ Hence (substituting "God" for "something than which a greater cannot be thought") God exists both in the understanding and in reality.

Why is it so necessary to Barth that the emphasis be placed on "*et intellectu et in re*" at the expense of "*existit*"? The answer is that it is the first stage in Barth's argument against reading Anselm as deriving the positive statement 'God exists' in accord with the classical interpretation and tradition.

(ii) Barth provides an equally unconvincing case when he assembles what he undoubtedly takes to be the decisive exegetical evidence in his favour. He begins this case as follows:

What Anselm regards as having had been proved by what has gone before is that the thing described as *aliquid quo maius cogitari non valet* has existence not only in knowledge but also has objective (and to that extent genuine) existence. Now how far has that been proved?⁹⁷

In the first sentence Barth appears to say that the conclusion of *Pros. 2* has been proved by the preceding steps in the argument. But he then asks the question "Now how far has that been proved?". His answer to that is:

In so far as it has been shown that God exists in the knowledge of the hearer when the Name of God is preached, understood and heard. But he cannot exist merely in the knowledge of the hearer because a God who exists merely thus stands in the impossible contradiction to his own Name as it is revealed and believed, because, in other words, he would be called God but would not be God. Thus as God he cannot exist as the one who exists merely in knowledge.⁹⁸

But then he adds:

It should be noted that nothing has been proved beyond this negative. The last word of the proof is *hoc esse non potest*, as also its intention was described only negatively: *Deus non potest esse in solo intellectu*.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Hopkins and Richardson (ed), *Anselm of Canterbury. Volume 1: Monologion, Proslogion, Debate with Gaunilo, and Meditation on Human Redemption*, translated by Hopkins and Richardson, (London, SCM Press, 1974), 94.

⁹⁶ Charlesworth, *St. Anselm's Proslogion*, 117.

⁹⁷ Barth, *FQI*, 128.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 128.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 128-129.

Where does this negative occur in the proof? At 2.4. Therefore it follows that his point is: *nothing is proved beyond the last sentence of 2.4*, 'But this clearly cannot be'. Barth goes on:

But the conclusion reaches further: God's existence *et in intellectu et in re* is concluded from the fact that a God who exists *in solo intellectu* has been proved impossible. With what justification? All that is proved is just this negative. The positive statement about the genuine and extramental existence of God ... does not stem from the proof and is in no sense derived from it but is proved by the proof only in so far as the opposite statement about God's merely intramental existence is shown to be absurd. Where the does this positive statement come from? It was suddenly brought in with the hypothetical *potest cogitari esse et in re* and it remains now merely because it was proved that the statement to the opposite effect was absurd. If that is a 'proof' it is a proof of an article of faith that holds apart from all proof. The positive statement cannot be traced back as it originates in revelation. And the statement that is opposite to it can only be reduced *ad absurdum* by means of another that likewise comes from revelation. God is *quo maius cogitari nequit*. That however can be done. And to that extent the genuine existence of God (in the general sense of the concept 'existence') can be proved and has been proved here.¹⁰⁰

First, what does it mean to say that "the positive statement is in no sense derived from it but is proved by the proof only in so far as the opposite statement about God's merely intramental existence is shown to be absurd"? Would a standard proof analysis not say that Barth is splitting hairs here? For surely the latter clause is one way in which the positive statement is derivable in the proof? Second, it is a proof of an article of faith, Barth says, that holds good apart from all faith. That is, even if 2.5 *were* the conclusion of a proof in the traditional sense, it is the proof of something that holds good *apart* from it. The proof, as it were, *superfluously* proves something that is already the case. In other words, Barth can live with the conclusion that the proof proper ends with the derived positive statement 'God exists' only if such proof is superfluous. He cannot live with the conclusion that genuine proof is a possibility because that would mean Anselm does advance into apologetic territory and attempt to satisfy the principle of proof for the external perspective's benefit.

Yet Barth cannot avoid acknowledging what is obvious to a neutral observer, namely that *Pros. 2* does not, on its own, warrant the conclusion that the article of

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 128-129.

faith "still holds good apart from all proof." In a footnote Barth writes:

That this is what Anselm means will become evident in *Pros.* 3, where in the parallel passage, the vital *et hoc est tu Domine, Deus Noster* (I 103, 3) appears. Why not here? Obviously because the proof in *Pros.* 2 is only a stage on the way to the proof proper which is not worked out till *Pros.* 3.¹⁰¹

Barth's explanation is not wholly convincing. For it amounts to the assertion that though it may not be clear at *Pros.* 2 that *Pros.* 2 means what he says it means, it becomes clear at *Pros.* 3. Therefore it also holds for *Pros.* 2! What Anselm meant in *Pros.* 2 depends on what Anselm meant in *Pros.* 3. Reading between the lines it indicates the difficulty he had in maintaining his interpretation. Indeed, he comes very close to admitting that (perhaps) Anselm does attempt to prove (logically) the existence of God in the sense of *deriving* 2.5. - deriving the proposition that God exists: "If that is a 'proof' then it is a proof of an article of faith which holds good apart from all proof". That is to say, even if it *is* a proof as Aquinas, Descartes, Leibniz, and Kant have it, Anselm can be still taken to mean that the article of faith is validated apart from it. Barth in effect provides what is really an *ad hoc* explanation for why *et hoc est tu Dominus* is not mentioned at *Pros.* 2. There is no reason why it could not have been mentioned at both points (*Pros.* 2 and 3). Barth simply begs the question why it was not mentioned at *Pros.* 2.

It may be countered that Barth's aim at *Pros.* 2 is simply to avoid deriving the conclusion that 'God exists' merely in a contingent manner, in the sense that God might not have existed. But the same pattern of interpretation accompanies *Pros.* 3 where God's existence is necessary in the sense that it is not possible to conceive God as not existing. In other words, Barth's interpretation of *Pros.* 3 follows *Pros.* 2 in all the above respects. For example, he follows 3.4 with the passage:

Again the conclusion is drawn: what is described as *aliquid quo maius cogitari non potest* exists in such a way that it cannot be conceived as not existing. To what extent is this conclusion binding? Clearly first of all, we repeat, only in so far as a 'God' conceivable as not existing is not disqualified from being God by the contradiction between the Name of the God who is revealed and the manner of existence of this so-called 'God'. God as he is revealed cannot in any circumstances exist in that way. But once more the actual conclusion stretches out beyond this negative that can be proved; from the impossibility of the revealed God having

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 129, n.2.

such an existence a conclusion is drawn as to the existence that is peculiar to him and which no thinking can question.¹⁰²

This passage, as Barth himself indicates, parallels the exegetical passage in *Pros.* 2 beginning "Now how far has that been proved?" and ending "It should be noted that nothing has been proved beyond this negative." He continues with another familiar refrain:

And again it has to be said: this last vital, positive statement appears (after the opposite statement about God's existence being questioned by thinking has been proved absurd), without its following as a consequence from the preceding line of thought.¹⁰³

The positive statement appears without its following as a consequence of the preceding line of thought. The preceding line of thought ends with 3.3 whose concluding statement is 'Which is a contradiction'. Of the positive statement Barth has this to say:

It is brought in as a possibility of thought alongside another (*potest cogitari esse aliquid ...*). If it is to remain, if it is now supposed to be proved, *sic ergo vere est*, then this can make sense only if an article of faith, fixed in itself as such, has been proved in such a way that the opposite statement would be reduced *ad absurdum* by means of the statement of the Name of God which is likewise to be revealed and believed.¹⁰⁴

If the positive statement in 3.3 does not follow as a logical deduction, what is its status? The answer is that it is there as a possibility of thought. Barth justifies this assertion as follows:

This article of faith (regarding that existence of God which is not only genuine but also incapable of being denied even theoretically) was introduced first of all disguised as a possibility of thought alongside another, and it remains before us as the positive result after this opposite statement has been dropped [*aus dem Felde geschlagen ist*].¹⁰⁵

Again, Barth's account of the exegetical evidence is somewhat forced. The positive statement remains after the opposite statement has been dropped. What does that mean? What does it mean to say that the opposite statement has been dropped? Has it really been dropped? Is it not still there as a premise to the conclusion?! Once

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 143.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 143.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 143.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 143.

again, in opposition to the apologetic interpretation, Barth is intent on repudiating any suggestion that Anselm derives the proposition "God cannot be conceived as not existing."

And to reiterate: the rationale behind Barth's repudiation is that, with the realist gap already eliminated, there is no apologetic territory into which the proof could advance.

Insofar as the traditional philosopher's concept of doubt is the other side of the coin to the traditional concept of proof, it too presupposes the realist gap. That is why Barth responds to it along predictable lines. The realist gap eliminated, there is no outside - no logical space - where doubt can be. It makes no sense to talk of apologetic proof delivering the traditional philosopher from doubt. Hence there is no traditional concept of doubt to satisfy:

... on no account can the given-ness or non-givenness of the results of *intelligere* involve for faith the question of its existence. Therefore, the aim of theology cannot be to lead men to faith, nor to confirm them in the faith, nor even to deliver their faith from doubt. Neither does the man who asks theological questions asks them for the sake of the existence of his faith; his theological answers can have no bearing on the existence of his faith.¹⁰⁶

Indeed, the concomitant sense of Barth on Anselm's Proof is that *intelligere* is simultaneously the insight that it doesn't make sense to doubt the existence of God - just as in Wittgenstein's hermeneutic where it doesn't make sense to doubt the existence of the external world. If there is no sense to the idea of apologetically proving the existence of God then there is no conceptual room for doubt. It too is unintelligible.

XI. Either Theology and Philosophy Assimilated to Science (There is no Limit to Criticism) or the Metadilemma Resolved (There is an Analytic-Synthetic Distinction).

The collapse of realism to grammatical truths in Wittgenstein's later philosophy and in Barth's theology implies a commitment to the analytic-synthetic

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 17.

distinction the philosopher Quine wishes to demolish.¹⁰⁷ For if all analytic truths are really revisable truths differing from synthetic truths only to the extent that they are more firmly entrenched in our system of beliefs (a difference only in degree not kind), then *pace* Wittgenstein and Barth the difference between philosophy and science, between theology and science, is only, if there is one at all, one of degree. Philosophy and theology are assimilated to science since everything is vulnerable to criticism. All statements are synthetic statements. That is why Bartley's pan-critical rationalism - "Criticise everything!" - entails (is perhaps even identical with) the elimination of the analytic-synthetic distinction.¹⁰⁸ Conversely, *pace* Quine, the commitment to *sui generis* philosophy and *sui generis* theology must imply a commitment to the distinction. Otherwise, in neither case could substantive truths have collapsed to grammatical truths; in neither case could the respective metadilemma have been resolved. In other words, either there is no criticism of the interface of the theological realm (or Wittgenstein's philosophical realm) or there is no resolution of the metatheological (or metaphilosophical) dilemma. Criticism means the collapse of the analytic-synthetic distinction, which in turn turns everything into science as in Quine's (and Bartley's) philosophy.

Yet Bartley contends his "account of rationality was developed in order to combat a contention that lies at the heart of all classical dogmatism, fideism, relativism, and scepticism - a claim to the effect that there is an inescapable limit to criticism and thus to rationality"¹⁰⁹ Thus his rejoinder to Barth and Wittgenstein would be that their respective theology and philosophy do not go far

¹⁰⁷ W V O Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism", *From a Logical Point of View: Nine Logico-Philosophical Essays*, revised edition, (New York, Harper Row Publishers, 1961), 20-46.

¹⁰⁸ Thus Bartley writes that "when I said that all positions were open to criticism I meant that statement in the sense in which Quine ... had argued against the analytic-synthetic distinction, claiming the revisability of all statements (including 'analytic statements' and 'necessary truths')" Bartley, III, "A Refutation of the Alleged Refutation of Comprehensively Critical Rationalism", in Radnitzky and Bartley, III (ed), *Evolutionary Epistemology, Theory of Rationality, and the Sociology of Knowledge* (La Salle, Illinois, Open Court, 1987), 341.

¹⁰⁹ Bartley, "Theories of Rationality", in Radnitzky and Bartley, III (ed), *Evolutionary Epistemology, Theory of Rationality, and the Sociology of Knowledge* (La Salle, Illinois, Open Court, 1987), 205.

enough to satisfy his criterion of rationality. Why should there be *any* limit to criticism? Why should Descartes not criticise the statement that the external world exists? Wittgenstein, Bartley complains, insists that "the standards - criteria, authorities, presuppositions, frameworks, or ways of life - to which appeal is made in such justification cannot and need not be themselves justified, and that a commitment must hence be made to them."¹¹⁰ In other words, Wittgenstein (and by implication Barth) posits a limit to criticism tantamount to fideism, though as Bartley acknowledges, this is done "without the glee" of the full-blooded irrationalist.¹¹¹

But Bartley as critical rationalist overlooks a crucial distinction between, on the one hand, Moore's argument with Descartes, and, on the other, Wittgenstein's argument with both Moore and Descartes. In the dialectic between Moore and Descartes it follows that if Moore's statements are true then Descartes' are false, and vice-versa. But ultimately, whatever the putative result, the plane of the external perspective remains unaffected, carries on existing. It does not in the later philosophy. First, the traditional philosopher's ultimate point of reference is forms of life and language-games. It is by means of them that he can be persuaded to relinquish the plane of the external perspective:

The preconceived idea of *crystalline purity* can only be removed by turning our whole examination around. (One might say: the axis of reference must be rotated, but about the fixed point of our real need.)¹¹²

PI § 108 is intended as a critique of the *Tractatus* but it can be extrapolated to encompass the traditional philosopher. He too requires that certain criteria, standards consonant with a preconceived canon of rationality, are met.¹¹³ Wittgenstein's reaction is to reverse the traditional direction of criticism: instead of

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 209.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 208.

¹¹² Wittgenstein, *PI* § 108.

¹¹³ "The more narrowly we examine actual language, the sharper becomes the conflict between it and our requirement. (For the crystalline purity of logic was, of course, not a *result of investigation*: it was a requirement.) *Ibid*, § 107.

traditional philosophy criticising Wittgenstein's philosophical realm, the philosophical realm (and actual language) criticises traditional philosophical language: we turn our whole examination around: "the axis of reference must be rotated, but about the fixed point of our real need." The traditional philosopher 'rotates' about a fixed point; that fixed point is our language-games and forms of life.

But second, and more importantly, since the result of such criticism is to collapse the plane of the external perspective there is no vantage-point from which the traditional philosopher *can* criticise. In other words, the reason that there is a limit to criticism is not because it is arbitrarily imposed by Wittgenstein but because philosophical criticism *doesn't make sense*. If the analytic-synthetic distinction implicit in the grammatical proposition follows from valid argument, it just doesn't make sense to "criticise everything".

Barth's theology follows the same pattern of reasoning and delivers exactly the same conclusion. Bartley's critical attitude presupposes the very realist gap Barth repudiates. Unless the aim is to criticise grammatical propositions (e.g., Is this (who we call) "God" - where all that can be called into question is our analogical etymological intelligence), Bartley must acknowledge that realist criticism is unintelligible.

XII. Barth and Wittgenstein: Resolution of the Metadilemma, First-Order *Sui Generis* Truth, and the Hegel-Realist Dialectic.

Bartley writes that "the movement from the early Wittgenstein to the work of the later Wittgenstein is a movement from a pre-critical, pre-Kantian position to a post-Kantian, Hegelian-style position *without benefit of Kant*."¹¹⁴ Yet it is more

¹¹⁴ Bartley, *Wittgenstein*, 47. H Schwyzer assimilates Wittgenstein's later philosophy as another version of Kant's Copernican Revolution. H Schwyzer, "Thought and Reality: The Metaphysics of Kant and Wittgenstein", in Shanker (ed), *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Critical Assessments*, vol iv, 150-162. Schwyzer seems to me to err at crucial points, specifically the attribution to Wittgenstein of what he calls the *Entitlement Question* (*Ibid*, 151), a variant of the transcendental question. For a criticism of this thesis see Hacker, *Insight*, "A Note on Kant and Wittgenstein", 206-214, where he contrasts the later philosophy and Kant. Hacker shows that there is nothing in the former approximating to a transcendental argument. Hacker's critique of R Scruton's interpretation of Wittgenstein's private

accurate to say that he held an Enlightenment-style position *without benefit of Kant*, which, in the transition from the earlier to the later philosophy, culminated in 'a Hegelian-style position'. For in collapsing saying to showing through collapsing realism to grammatical truth, the later philosophy did away with the gap between thought and reality characteristic of philosophical realism. If Marx's dialectical materialism turned Hegel's idealist dialectic on its head, Wittgenstein's dissolution of philosophical theses to grammatical propositions is a historical recapitulation of Hegel's 'Great Idea' of the identity of thought and being. In dissolving philosophical problems the later philosophy collapses the gap between thought and reality characteristic of realism just as Hegel's identity dissolves the total diastasis in Kant between noumenon and phenomenon.¹¹⁵

As Peter Singer has written, Hegel "set himself an extraordinary task. Beginning with a powerful critique of knowledge taken by Kant (and not only Kant, but all philosophers who start off by assuming a division between one who knows and the thing that is known)",¹¹⁶ he reaches a point in the *Phenomenology* where "knowledge is no longer compelled to go beyond itself, where reality will no longer be an unknowable beyond, but instead mind will know reality directly and be at one with it. Now we can understand what all this meant: absolute knowledge is reached

language argument is an excellent example of why Wittgenstein and Kant part company on the transcendental question. Scruton asserts: "Wittgenstein argues that there can be no knowledge of experience which does not presuppose reference to a public world. I can know my own experience immediately and incorrigibly, but only because I apply to it concepts which gain their sense for public usage. And public usage describes a reality observable to others beside myself." R Scruton, *Kant* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1982), 35. But Hacker's response is that this is not a correct account of the private language argument since "Wittgenstein emphatically denied that 'I can know my own experience immediately and incorrigibly', not because I can know my experience only mediately and corrigibly, but because there is no such thing as 'knowing my experience'." Hacker, *Insight*, 212. That is, I can neither know my own experience immediately and incorrigibly nor can I know my own experience only mediately and corrigibly; rather, both assertions are meaningless.

¹¹⁵ To be sure, the gap between self and world is not an example of the gap between phenomenon and noumenon in Kant's philosophy (Kant believes a proof is possible in the former but not in the latter case). Yet Wittgenstein's dissolution of realism in the problem of the external world proceeds along Hegelian lines, that is, *as if* he were advancing the claim of *Speculative Reason*.

¹¹⁶ P Singer, *Hegel* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1983), 52.

when mind realises that *what it seeks is itself*.¹¹⁷ Thus, identity instated, the divide between thought and reality is eliminated. The philosophical problem is not so much solved as dissolved.

Wittgenstein's later philosophy is, *mutatis mutandis*, a resolution of the same problem. That it satisfies Enlightenment autonomy has already been demonstrated. The question is whether it can do this and satisfy the aspiration to unity. To the extent that its dissolution of the gap between thought and reality is simultaneously a dissolution of the second-order leaving the first-order, leaving first-order participation in forms of life, Wittgenstein becomes as one with, and is no longer separated off from, alienated from, forms of life. In such a moment Wittgenstein the 'Romantic' gets his wish and returns to life lived in the spirit of the Cambridge bed-maker.¹¹⁸ Wittgenstein the philosopher is (at least temporarily) no more. And since forms of life are the only reality in the later philosophy (the external perspective having been eliminated), Wittgenstein becomes at one with, is no longer separated off from, alienated from, *reality*. Such is the consequence of the later philosophy's resolution of Hume's metaphilosophical dilemma.

Barth's theology - driven on at all times by Overbeck's metatheological dilemma - is also a cumulative movement from an Enlightenment-style position *without benefit of Kant* to 'a Hegelian-style position'. In *Romans II* Barth's 'corrective' has *everything* human done away with; everything human collapses - as a condition of *sui generis* theology; the shroud of nothingness hangs over man, himself a phenomenon of non-theology. But that is the price worth paying for the truth of 'God is God' recovered. *Inter alia*, in *Romans II* an embryonic Hegelianism takes the form of the undialectical realism of non-theology collapsing to the dialectical speech of the (insufficiently) *sui generis* theology. In the later theology it appears as if a restoration of sorts takes place. Barth replaces the bomb crater of

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 70.

¹¹⁸ When Wittgenstein discussed philosophical questions he "poked fun at traditional modes of philosophising, and used the bed-maker (i.e., female college servant) as a measuring rod when traditional philosophical arguments were raised in the class. 'What', he would ask, 'would my bed-maker say of this kind of abstract talk?'" W Mays, "Recollections of Wittgenstein", in Fann (ed), *Wittgenstein: the Man and his Philosophy* (New York, Dell Publishing, 1967), 82.

revelation in *Romans II* with a gentle reading of the resurrection stories with the man Jesus in the mode of God *together* with the human (all too human) witnesses. But the appearance is deceptive: realism does not gain a foothold in the later theology. Barth has gone as far as he is prepared to resurrect human epistemology in *sui generis* theology. He had in fact realised how he could retain the human presence without compromising 'God is God'. As in *Romans II* the interruptedness of language prevails: at the very scene of prototypical revelation, at the very scene of epistemological resolution, the language-bearer is without a realist voice. Yet it is this very phenomenon that leaves us integrated into the Gospel story without having sacrificed our reason. In the transition to *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* and the *Church Dogmatics*, Barth's 'Hegelianism', when fully developed, converges to (second-order) saying collapsing to grammatical truth and (second-order) realism to first-order showing. The gap characteristic of realism dissolves.

What is left is first-order *sui generis* theological truth. First-order *sui generis* truth is faith described in terms of its object collapsing to the object. But, as we know now, this is what faith described in terms of its object meant all along. This is the logical correlative of realism collapsing to grammatical truth. Thus we are left with the imperative (first-order) first moment of the theological realm, prototypical revelation, Jesus Christ's resurrection appearances. There we must, by force of logic, not the critical-historical method nor any other empirical discipline, acknowledge the Incarnation, the Empty Tomb, the Virgin Birth, the angels - the whole panorama of *sui generis* theological truth - just as the Apostles did in their time.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Barth characterises the biblical witnesses as the Barthian counterparts to the Cambridge bed-maker in Wittgenstein's imaginative world: "The position of theology ... can in no wise be exalted *above* that of the biblical witnesses. The post-Biblical theologian may, no doubt possess a better astronomy, geography, zoology, psychology, physiology, and so on than these biblical witnesses possessed; but as for the Word of God, he is not justified in comporting himself in relationship to these witnesses as though he knew more about the Word than they. He is neither the President of a seminary, nor the Chairman of the Board of some Christian Institute of Advanced Theological Studies, who might claim some authority over the prophets and apostles. He cannot grant or refuse them a hearing as though they were colleagues of the faculty. Still less is he a high school teacher authorised to look over their shoulder benevolently or crossly, to correct their notebooks, or to give them good, average, or bad marks. Even the simplest, strangest, or obscurest among the biblical witnesses has an incomparable advantage over even the most pious, scholarly, and sagacious latter-day theologian." Barth, *Evangelical Theology: an Introduction*, 31-32.

Concluding Remarks.

Subsequent to second-order reason collapsing to first-order *sui generis* theological truth is the emergence of first-order language, proclamation, principally narrative, in this case a specific Biblical narrative, Gospel narrative. The thatness of proclamation - that it exists at all - is the work of the Holy Spirit. That leaves the question of the identity of proclamation. What does it say? Since it is primarily on the basis of such a text/proclamation that Barth reaches his theological conclusions, this raises the question of *meaning*, the *hermeneutical* problem. How could Barth be certain that the Bible, and the Gospel narrative in particular, was about God's self-revelation, the Godness of God, and so on? And if such scepticism was logically viable, didn't it mean that *sui generis* theological truth had finally - in spite of its valiant resistance - been swallowed up by realism, reduced by realism to realism, in this case hermeneutical realism - the doctrine that says a specific passage might always mean other than what it is taken to mean? This is a question for chapter 8.

Chapter Eight

I. Hermeneutical Realism Charges Barth with Hermeneutical Fideism.

Werner Jeanrond asks a question that is no less than the sub-title of his essay, "Karl Barth's Hermeneutics: How Critical is Barth's Hermeneutics?" The answer he gives is: they are not critical enough. The reason is that every reader or listener of the biblical text has to enter the hermeneutical process itself, break into the hermeneutical *circle*. Thus, as against Barth, Jeanrond quotes with approval Bultmann's axiom of interpretation:

This is why there is a circle: to understand the text, it is necessary to believe in what the text announces to me; but what the text announces to me is given nowhere but in the text. This is why it is necessary to understand the text in order to believe.¹

But to understand the text requires both *textual criticism* and *scepticism*. Textual criticism and scepticism are predicated on the assumption of the validity of the question of meaning. In other words, *hermeneutical realism* is assumed in the sense that the question "Couldn't 'x' mean otherwise?" is assumed to be a valid question.²

But when Jeanrond turns to Barth's hermeneutic he detects a species of fideism collapsing the realist question. For much of his essay Jeanrond juxtaposes Barth's hermeneutics to Bultmann's to Barth's disadvantage. According to Jeanrond, "Barth's hermeneutics begin where Bultmann's hermeneutics might eventually lead to"³ In other words, Barth begins with the presupposition that the Bible (and the

¹ W Jeanrond, "Karl Barth's Hermeneutics" in N Biggar (ed), *Reckoning With Barth. Essays in Commemoration of the Centenary of Karl Barth's Birth* (Oxford, A R Mowbray & Co., 1988), 91.

² The comparison between, on the one hand, hermeneutical realism, and, on the other, ontological and epistemological realism, is obvious: all three presuppose a gap between statement and fact. The difference is that where the gap in ontological and epistemological realism is one between object-language and object, in hermeneutical realism it is a gap between metalanguage and object-language. In other words, it is the difference between on the one hand

'Snow is white' is true iff snow is white,
and, on the other,
'"Snow is white" means snow is white' is true
iff "Snow is white" means snow is white.

³ Jeanrond, "Karl Barth's Hermeneutics", 86.

Gospels in particular) tell us about God's self-revelation. Bultmann in the spirit of criticality makes no such assumption. Instead he assumes the realist gap. Certainly the text might turn out to mean God's self-revelation; but because there is no logical *a priori* guarantee that this is what it means, it can only be established through critical investigation. In that sense Bultmann's is a freer more critical hermeneutical spirit. For Barth "hermeneutics is not an introductory reflection before actual theology begins. It is a part of theology proper and, thus, part of dogmatics."⁴ For Bultmann the condition of *pre-understanding* is a prerequisite of theological thinking. In contrast to Barth's *macro-hermeneutics* (which explore our understanding in the light of God's self-revelation) Rudolf Bultmann's *micro-hermeneutics* begin at the beginning, the interpretation of texts itself. Barth's hermeneutics is a *material* hermeneutics,⁵ in contrast to Bultmann's, which are a *formal* hermeneutics. Thus for Jeanrond the crucial question to be directed against Barth is:

How can we estimate whether Barth's macro-hermeneutics is adequate except through our own readings of the texts themselves? In other words, in order to see if Barth's universalisation of his particular hermeneutical experience is legitimate, we must go the long way through the texts. No macro-hermeneutics without critical micro-hermeneutics! Without such a continuous test Barth's criterion for biblical interpretation, God's self-revelation, remains indeed mere positivism, as Bonhoeffer suggested.⁶

In other words, in the realm of hermeneutics the choice is again an exhaustive and mutually exclusive one between, on the one hand, criticism (and scepticism), and, on the other, fideism. Accordingly, it appears to Jeanrond as if Jüngel's assertion that "the priority of the answer over the question becomes the indispensable hermeneutic of Barth's subsequent theological work"⁷ can only mean

⁴ *Ibid*, 84.

⁵ Thus Jüngel writes: "That explains why as early on as the *Prolegomena der kirchlichen Dogmatik* (1927) statements of dogmatic content take precedence over the hermeneutical difficulties. But cf. also the placing of 'ontic necessity and rationality' before its corresponding 'noetic necessity and rationality' in Barth's interpretation of Anselm (*Fides Querens Intellectum. Anselms Bewies der Existenz Gottes*) ..., which is fundamental to his *Church Dogmatics*." Jüngel, *Trinity*, xii.

⁶ Jeanrond, "Karl Barth's Hermeneutics", 91-2.

⁷ Jüngel, *Karl Barth, A Theological Legacy*, 34.

one thing, namely that Barth dispensed with criticism, and scepticism, and embraced fideism:

He did not help us to see ... how we might legitimately read the texts in a different way with different results. Barth did not tackle the problems of such a legitimate pluralism.⁸

Though Jeanrond's final sentence seems to imply a relativism of sorts, it insists that the theologian acknowledges the irreducible (realist) gap between any assertion concerning the meaning of a text, or part thereof, and what the text, or part thereof, means (without necessarily committing oneself to the principle that the text in question, or part thereof, means one thing only).

It is clear that Jeanrond's criticism of Barth distinguishes Barth's position from the position Hans Frei held at an earlier stage in his theological development and one that he came to repudiate. For Frei at that time satisfied Jeanrond's hermeneutical criterion. To be sure, Frei states that

Hermeneutics I define in the old-fashioned, rather narrow, and low-keyed manner as the rules and principles governing exegesis. This is in contrast to the recent ambitious, indeed all-encompassing view of hermeneutics as enquiry into the process that goes into understanding or interpreting linguistic phenomena. In the latter instance, hermeneutics becomes practically equivalent to general philosophical inquiry; and the language-to-be-interpreted becomes shorthand for a whole philosophical or theological anthropology, a view of man as language-bearer.⁹

But this definition, as Frei himself came to see, did not exempt him from entering the hermeneutical circle at same place in the circle as Bultmann, Ricoeur, and Tracey:

... the less high powered general theory that upholds the literal or realistic reading of the Gospels may be just as perilously perched as its more majestic and pretentious hermeneutical cousin.¹⁰

In other words, where previously Frei had thought the distinction between his hermeneutics and 'philosophical' hermeneutics was one of kind, he realised now that

⁸ Jeanrond, "Karl Barth's Hermeneutics", 92.

⁹ Frei, *The Identity of Jesus Christ*, xvi.

¹⁰ Frei, "The 'Literal Reading' of Biblical Narrative", 64. Vanhoozer criticises Frei for revoking his commitment to a realist hermeneutic. Vanhoozer, *Biblical Narrative in the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*, 173-176. But as Frei himself saw, this commitment affiliated him into the company of Bultmann, Ricoeur, and Tracey rather than disassociated him from it. Ironically, it is on the basis of Frei's earlier commitment to the realist hermeneutic that Vanhoozer *distinguishes* Frei from such company. *Ibid*, 153-154.

the difference was only one of degree. Both types of hermeneutics affirmed the hermeneutical circle.¹¹

II. Barth's Repudiation of Hermeneutical Realism: the Precedence of *Sui Generis* Truth Over Meaning.

What is Barth's response to Jeanrond's charge? Thus far it has been said that Barth affirms the *sui generis* autonomy of theology in the form of a *sui generis* autonomous theological realm where there is no logical space for the methodological tools of the non-theological - historical criticism, philosophical empiricism, anthropological cross-cultural comparisons, abstraction of psychological universals, etc. - even to co-exist in vestigial form, far less be a natural and logical concomitant of the theological. These are all methodologies of truth over which Barth's *sui generis* theological truth has prerogative.

But now *sui generis* theological truth has prerogative over all methodologies of *meaning*. In other words, since for Barth *sui generis* truth has priority over meaning, it also follows that there is no space for 'external' hermeneutical theory of even the most modest kind.

Scriptura sacra was, Barth believed, self-explanatory. The Gospel story too is self-explanatory. Indeed, not only is it, as Jüngel asserts, self-demythologising,¹² not only is it self-dehistoricising, it is self-retheologising; or rather it is precisely *because* it is self-retheologising that it is all the others too. And last but not least, it is also *self-dehermeneuticizing*.

That it is self-dehermeneuticizing is the final necessary component part of Barth's resolution of the metatheological dilemma. This property - what Barth calls a *peculiarity* [*Eigenart*] of the biblical witness¹³ - replicates in the realm of meaning (the plane of the external perspective of meaning), the effect of *sui generis* truth in the realm of truth (the plane of the external perspective of truth). It resolves

¹¹ In *The Identity of Jesus Christ*, Frei acknowledges the hermeneutical circle as his hermeneutical context. See Frei, *Identity of Jesus Christ*, xvii.

¹² Jüngel, *Karl Barth: a Theological Legacy*, 59.

¹³ Barth, *CD I/2*, 469.

the metatheological dilemma without incurring the charge of: *sui generis* theology but hermeneutical fideism, on the one hand; or non-theology but rational (i.e., critical), on the other. It does not create a space for historicist Enlightenment hermeneutics, "the inquiry concerned with the presuppositions and rules of interpretation of some form of human expression, usually a written text"¹⁴ In other words, what Barth does not endorse is the implication of the hermeneutical-realist gap.

Not only is it the case that hermeneutical realism is not a sufficient condition of *sui generis* theology (and hence of resolving the metatheological dilemma), it is in fact a sufficient condition of non-theology (and therefore of *not* resolving the dilemma). The path Barth follows to reach his conclusions *vis-à-vis* hermeneutics parallels the path he took *vis-à-vis* truth. Instead of an external perspective of meaning calling his standpoint into question, as in Jeanrond's question "How adequate is Karl Barth's hermeneutic?", Barth reverses the direction of criticism. His standpoint is precisely a standpoint that repudiates all hermeneutical vantage-points from which this standpoint could be criticised. In other words, his position repudiates all realist species of hermeneutics.

One of the unexpected casualties of Barth's hermeneutical position in the *Church Dogmatics* is in fact *Romans* II. Contrary to Jüngel's, Dalferth's and Jeanrond's implicit assumption that Barth's approach to the hermeneutical problem remained constant from *Romans* II onward,¹⁵ the advent of *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* in Barth's theological development saw to it that the *Church Dogmatics*, and I/2 in particular, heralded a subtle yet crucial shift in Barth's thinking. What Barth broke with was the realist hermeneutic of *Romans* II.

To be sure, Barth affirmed a hermeneutic of simultaneity,¹⁶ of

¹⁴ Van A Harvey, *A Handbook of Theological Terms* (London, G Allen and Unwin, 1966), 100-101.

¹⁵ Jeanrond's assumption in this respect is for the most part explicit. His is a basically cumulative view of Barth's hermeneutics, building on the second and third prefaces to *Romans* II and adding to that structure evidence from *Church Dogmatics* I/1 and I/2. Jeanrond, "Karl Barth's Hermeneutics", 84-89.

¹⁶ Jüngel, *Karl Barth: a Theological legacy*, 71.

contemporaneity, "allowing him to take his place alongside the biblical witnesses and not in the position of an onlooker (or observer)",¹⁷ from *Romans II* onward:

How energetically Calvin, having first established what stand in the text, sets himself to rethink the whole material and to wrestle with it, until the walls that separate the sixteenth century from the first become transparent! Paul speaks and the man of the sixteenth century hears. The conversation between the original record and the reader moves round the subject-matter until a distinction between yesterday and to-day become impossible.¹⁸

Again:

The Word ought to be exposed in the words. Intelligent comment means that I am driven on until I stand with nothing before me but the enigma of the matter; until the document hardly seems to exist as a document; until I have almost forgotten that I am not its author; until I know the author so well that I allow him to speak in my name and am even able to speak in his name myself.¹⁹

And in *Church Dogmatics I/2*, Barth reaffirms simultaneity:

Because the Word of God meets us in the form of the scriptural word, assimilation means the contemporaneity, homogeneity and indirect identity of the reader and hearer of Scripture with the witness of revelation. Assimilation means assuming this witness into our own responsibility. How can we have heard it, and how can we be its hearers if and so long as we still distinguish our own concern from its concern? How can we have heard its word if we do not feel compelled to speak it as our own word to ourselves and pass it on to others?²⁰

Yet the hermeneutic of simultaneity is not a sufficient condition for collapsing the realist gap. This, of course, lets scepticism in. And indeed, in *Romans II* Barth implicitly acknowledges it is always possible to ask the sceptical question. Speaking of the infinite qualitative distinction between time and eternity Barth asserts:

When I am faced by such a document as the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, I embark on its interpretation on the assumption that he is confronted with the same unmistakable and unmeasurable significance of that relation as I myself am confronted with, and that it is this situation which moulds his thought and its expression. Nor am I unique in making an assumption at the outset. Other commentators do the same, though their assumptions are more pragmatic: as, for example, when they assume that the Epistle was written by Paul in the first century A.D. Whether these assumptions are justified or not becomes clear in the course of

¹⁷ Dalferth, "Karl Barth's Eschatological Realism", 25.

¹⁸ Barth, *CR II*, 7.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 8.

²⁰ Barth, *CD I/2*, 736.

the investigation, when each verse comes to be examined and interpreted. In this uncertainty my fundamental assumption is, of course included. For the present, however, I assume that in the Epistle to the Romans Barth did speak about Jesus Christ, and not of someone else. And this is as reputable an assumption as other assumptions that historians are wont to make. The actual exegesis will alone decide whether this assumption can be maintained. If Paul was not primarily concerned about the permanent KRISIS of the relation between time and eternity, but was dealing with some other theme, the absurdity of a false assumption will become clear in the course of a detailed examination of the text. Questioned as to the ground of my assumption that this was, in fact, Paul's theme, I answer by asking quite simply whether if the Epistle is to be treated seriously at all, it is reasonable to approach it with any other assumption than that God is God.²¹

Of singular significance here is that Barth acknowledges it is possible Paul might *not* have been speaking of Jesus Christ. In other words, the sceptical question is allowed to interpose itself between the interpreter and Paul. Thus the question What did Paul mean? What is Paul's theme? is answered by: Jesus Christ; the KRISIS between time and eternity; God is *God*. Yet it is always possible that we have misunderstood Paul on this, that he meant someone or something else. Barth could not see past a realist hermeneutic at the time of *Romans II*. Why?

It is from the vantage-point of *Church Dogmatics I/2* that the answer is forthcoming. In *Romans II* the evangelical witness (in this case Paul) is juxtaposed to the essential otherness of revelation such that he can only speak about it dialectically. The last thing that can happen to the witness in *Romans II* is that he be conjoined to revelation. On the contrary, there is a complete diastasis between God and man such that revelation and man are never ever in the same frame together. In *Romans II*, Paul cannot be taken up into revelation or rather the *ratio* of revelation cannot be "taken [up] into [*mitaufgenommene*]" Paul's proclamation. Revelation in *Romans II* does not include the biblical witness. Hence the reason that the hermeneutic of simultaneity is not a sufficient condition for the rejection of hermeneutical realism is that the hermeneutical gap is unavoidable in the presence of the gap between God's self-revelation and man. That is why Barth could not see beyond hermeneutical realism at the time of *Romans II*. That is why hermeneutical realism finds a place in the dialectical theology.

By the time of the *Church Dogmatics* the situation has changed. There the

²¹ *Ibid*, 10-11.

witness is, in language Barth used at a critical juncture of *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, spoken of as being "taken into" [*aufgenommene*] revelation such that he can only speak about it "analytically" [*analytischen*]. In other words, hermeneutical realism collapses according to the same laws as those prescribing the collapse of material realism in the realm of truth. The logical implications of faith described in terms of its object in the realm of truth are replicated in the realm of meaning. The meaning of the text couldn't mean other than Jesus Christ. Once again, it is *Romans* II which treaded the conventional path and it is the *Church Dogmatics* which broke with it.

In conventional apologetics, the question 'Is x true?' is always preceded by the question 'What does x mean?'. The question of meaning precedes truth (belief). In other words, it is the received logic that to ask the question 'Is x true?' presupposes that one has already established what x means. (If truth then necessarily meaning, but not vice-versa.) In reversing the direction of criticism Barth also reverses the order in which these two questions are resolved. The question of truth is superordinate to meaning.

In *Church Dogmatics* I/2 chapter III "Holy Scripture", § 19 'The Word of God in the Church' Barth tells us that the statement 'The biblical witness is the witness of revelation' is "important and full of content".²²

If it is a witness of revelation ... then the witness itself and as such - as well as the revelation which it attests - is necessarily in the power of the revelation²³

What does Barth mean by "in the power of the revelation" [*in Kraft der Offenbarung*]? It is not only that "it is only by revelation that revelation can spoken of at all",²⁴ it is that the Bible is not to be *distinguished* from revelation. To be sure, "... the witness ... is not itself revelation, but only, and this is the limitation - the witness to it."²⁵ But this limitation has a surprising implication:

²² Barth, *CD* I/2, 459.

²³ *Ibid*, 459.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 469.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 463.

The concept of witness, especially when we bear clearly in mind its limiting sense, has still something very positive to say. In this limitation the Bible is not distinguished from revelation.²⁶

In other words, though a "real witness is not identical with that to which it witnesses", he is not to be distinguished from it: the Bible is not to be distinguished from revelation.²⁷

Is this not an uncritical pre-Enlightenment deference to authority and tradition? Can Barth even make the distinction between, on the one hand, the witness not being identical with that to which he witnesses, and, on the other, the witness not being distinguished from revelation?

Barth resolves these questions by means of what he calls the "peculiarity" [*diese Eigenart*] of the biblical witness.²⁸ With respect to the second question, this peculiarity secures what could be called *non-separability within (the context of) non-identity*. And in fact, the peculiarity endows such a concept with its prototypical instantiation:

If it is to be witness at all, and to be apprehended as such, the biblical witness must itself be attested by what it attests.²⁹

The Biblical witness must attest itself, it must be self-attesting - especially if it wishes to be understood at all. Indeed, it is a necessary condition of it being a witness that it itself is attested by what it attests. But if it attests itself, what does it attest? It attests itself attesting Jesus Christ. It is self-attesting *because* it attests Jesus Christ:

The witness of Holy Scripture to itself consists simply in the fact that it is witness to Jesus Christ. And the knowledge of the truth of this self-witness, the knowledge of its unique authority, stands or falls with the knowledge that Jesus Christ is the incarnate Son of God.³⁰

That it witnesses *Jesus Christ* is itself the guarantee that it witnesses itself.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 463.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 463.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 469. And Barth emphasises how important this concept will become for him in § 19.2 when he writes: "We shall have to return expressly to this peculiarity of the biblical witness in the second section of this chapter under the title 'Scripture and the Word of God'". *Ibid*, 469.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 469.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 485.

That it witnesses (and therefore means) Jesus Christ: if this were the extent of Barth's answer to the question "How do we know what this text means?" then Jeanrond's criticism that Barth's position on hermeneutics truly requires fideistic commitment would carry substance.³¹ But in point of fact, the sentence contains a number of 'suppressed premises', as it were, which emerge from their containment as Barth proceeds with his theme. One premise in this respect is *prototypicality*. Barth continues from above:

To this general and implicit self-witness [*Selbstzeugnis*], however, there corresponds a specific and explicit.³²

To be sure:

Everywhere the Bible speaks not only of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ as opposed to all men, man and humanity. It does, of course, do that. In fact, we must say that this is the real content of the Bible.³³

But it also speaks of the witnesses of revelation. This too is part of the content of the Bible. But not only is it part of the content of the Bible, it is part of the content of revelation:

We have seen earlier that the man addressed and claimed in revelation and claimed in revelation belongs as such to its content, is taken into [*mitgenommene*] revelation itself.³⁴

Barth continues:

³¹ Barth continues with more of the same:

"... because this knowledge coincides with the knowledge of faith in His resurrection from the dead, we must say that Scripture attests itself in the fact that at its decisive centre it attests the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. But the attestation of Jesus, which awakens faith and its knowledge, is itself only the self-attestation of God by the Holy Spirit. In the final analysis, therefore, we have to say that Holy Scripture testifies to and for itself by the fact that the Holy Spirit testifies to the resurrection of Christ and therefore that He is the incarnate son of God." *Ibid*, 485-486.

But all Barth appears to have said is that the proclamation of prototypical revelation is initiated by the Holy Spirit.

³² *Ibid*, 486.

³³ *Ibid*, 486.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 486. *Mitgenommene* is the term Barth has already used in *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* when he spoke of the *ratio* of the object of faith being "taken up into" [*mitaufgenommene*] knowledge of the object of faith. See chapter 5 of this thesis. Conjoined to the analytic, it constitutes additional textual evidence that Barth equates *the ratio of the object of faith being taken up into knowledge of the object of faith* with *faith described in terms of the object*.

But now we must go further and say more concretely, that the content of the Bible, as understood in this setting, has a definite form, which cannot be separated from it as this content. The Bible as a witness of divine revelation comes to every man, all men, and in a measure includes them in itself. Rightly understood, all humanity, whether it is aware of it or not, does actually stand in the Bible, and is therefore itself posited as a witness of divine revelation. But that this is the case is made possible and conditioned by the fact that in the first instance not all men but certain specific men stand in the Bible: that is, men who in face of the unique and contingent revelation had the no less unique and contingent function of being the first witnesses.³⁵

That is why where in the Old Testament it is the prophets,

... in the New Testament, indissolubly [*nicht zu trennen*] bound up with Jesus Christ, there are the figures of his disciples, His followers His apostles, those who are called by Him, the witnesses of His resurrection, those to whom He has directly promised and given His Holy Spirit.³⁶

Barth concludes:

Therefore the specific and explicit self-witness of Scripture consists in the fact that, from the standpoint of the form in which its content is offered and alone offered to us, it is the witness of these specific men.³⁷

The form is part of the content and cannot but be part of the content; in fact (as we shall see) rather than being a description of the contents, it is described in terms of the contents (it is logically inseparable from the contents):

As the witness of divine revelation the Bible also attests the institution and function of prophets and apostles. And in doing so it attests itself as Holy Scripture, as the indispensable form of that content. But because this is the case, in this question of divine revelation the Church, and with it theology, has to hold fast to the unity of content and form. The distinction of form and content must not involve any separation.³⁸

Moreover, here Barth reiterates his commitment to prototypicality: since the witnesses of revelation - the Bible - attests itself as the indispensable form of that content (revelation) this must hold good for the Church and its theology.

But does this not create a space for the very dualism that Barth is at pains to reject? If we cannot have the content of the text apart from the text, the content apart from the form in which it is given to us, then we cannot have revelation "in itself" but only as it appears in the text. And indeed this is what Barth appears to

³⁵ *Ibid*, 486.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 486.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 486.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 492.

say:

Even on the basis of the biblical witness we cannot have revelation except through this witness. We cannot have revelation "in itself".³⁹

Thus:

The purpose of the biblical revelation is not to help us achieve this, so that its usefulness is outlived when it is achieved.⁴⁰

Prima facie, this appears to leave open the possibility of hermeneutical realism. It appears as if Barth is saying all we have is what the witnesses say; for various reasons we cannot go beyond their word or get behind it; we cannot get behind revelation "as it is proclaimed by the witnesses" to revelation "in itself". But if that is so, then the realist question of meaning remains legitimate.

Barth compounds the appearance that he is scoring points on the side of dualism, and therefore for hermeneutical realism, when he concludes:

There are, therefore, no points of comparison to make it possible for us even to free ourselves from this witness, to put ourselves into direct relationship to the theme of it.⁴¹

Yet the reason there are "no points of comparison", that we cannot "put ourselves into direct relationship to the theme of this witness", is that the theme of revelation *means* one cannot have the revelation without the witnesses:

And it is in keeping with the nature of this theme that (in the form of the calling and enlightening and empowering of these specific men) it has been indissolubly linked with its witness, i.e., their witness.⁴²

Thus when Barth writes that in this question of revelation we are "tied to

³⁹ *Ibid*, 492.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 492.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 492. Barth distinguishes between our not having revelation "in itself" and there being no revelation "in itself". The prototypical witnesses are "immediate and direct recipients of it":

"It is simply revelation as it comes to us ... who are not the immediate and direct recipients of the one revelation, witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Yet it is for us revelation by means of the words of the prophets and apostles written in the Bible, in which they are still alive for us as the immediate and direct recipients of revelation, and by which they speak to us. A real witness is not identical with that to which it witnesses, but it sets it before us. Again this corresponds with the facts on which the truth of the whole proposition is founded." *Ibid*, 463.

⁴² *Ibid*, 492.

these texts",⁴³ this is because revelation means *inter alia*: *that which the witnesses are taken (up) into*. In *Romans II* there is no indissoluble link between revelation and witness. There the witness is not inside the sphere of revelation, in the realm of faith described in terms of its object. In *Romans II*, it seemed to Barth that the nature of revelation - its utter "otherness" - excluded the incorporation of the witness into (as opposed to identity with) the revelation. In the *Church Dogmatics*:

The relationship between theme and text must be accepted as essential and indissoluble. The form cannot therefore be separated from the content and there can be no question of a consideration of the content apart from the form. We cannot therefore put the question of truth in the direct way it was arbitrarily thought it should be put.⁴⁴

Faith described in terms of its object at the level of truth is duplicated at the hermeneutical level. The form - the text - is described in terms of the content - the revelation. Hence just as the prototypical witness is (prototypically) taken into (prototypical) revelation then so for a second time - again in the material sense - the prototypical witness as witness - as bearer of a text - is taken into prototypical revelation. The reason we cannot consider that content apart from the form is that we cannot have the form separated from the content. Literally, we can only have the form as a *part* of the content - as an 'object' of the content like the Virgin Birth, the Empty Tomb, etc. That is why the idea of putting ourselves into direct experience of revelation "in itself" is a incoherent one: that the theme "in itself" contains the witnesses is a logical and not an empirical point (just as the fact that the *sui generis* theological realm contains the Empty tomb is a logical point and not an empirical one).

A central Barthian proposition can now be put into perspective. *Sui generis* theological truth itself is incomplete if it does not include the fact of our asserting *sui generis* theological truth, which is to say, if the proclamation and/or description of the fact that we proclaim and/or describe the theological realm is omitted from the theological realm. In other words, proclamation itself belongs to theological truth. Hence to fail to describe ourselves proclaiming is to fail to describe *sui*

⁴³ *Ibid*, 492.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 493.

generis theological truth.⁴⁵ The proclaimer proclaims the theological realm which includes himself proclaiming the theological realm, like Vermeer's presence in his paintings except rather more corporeal.

Thus, like the Empty Tomb, the Virgin Birth, etc., proclamation is itself a material element of the theological realm. In that respect it is not to be distinguished from these other components. Proclamation itself is an 'entity' in the *sui generis* theological realm and has to be treated as such - not historically, psychologically or anthropologically but *sui generis* theologically. Theology is in the material sense incomplete if it does not encompass this object of theology.⁴⁶

But if resolving the metatheological dilemma requires that hermeneutical realism collapses to the analytic (*a posteriori*) then not only is it like the Empty Tomb, etc., in the above respect, it is like them in another even more important respect: like them it is *necessarily* a material element of the theological realm.

That "... the appearances of Jesus Christ are the proper theme of the New Testament narratives", is not only true,⁴⁷ it is analytically true. Again, "Jesus Christ in his self-revelation is ... the basic text which was already read and expounded by the Apostles, which they attested as its direct witness, by the symbols and theology of the Church, and finally by ourselves"⁴⁸ - this too is analytic.⁴⁹ Barth

⁴⁵ It is submitted that this is the deep reason behind Barth's belief expressed toward the end of his life that it was possible to begin a dogmatics "with the Christian man [...] [though] only with the existence of man in the communion of the Holy spirit. Not everything is allowed! We cannot begin with Bultmann's starting-point: man's existence as such." Barth, *Karl Barth's Table Talk* (Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1963), 13-14.

⁴⁶ That means speaking *metalinguistically* is a logical consequence of *sui generis* theology. The text is a first-order phenomenon; talk about the text is a second-order phenomenon. As in Wittgenstein, where there is no contradiction between, on the one hand, philosophical theses collapsing to grammatical truths, and, on the other, being able to talk of language in a second-order fashion (as Wittgenstein does all the time in the *Investigations*), then similarly there is no contradiction between Barth collapsing substantive truth-claims to grammatical truths and Barth talking of proclamation - *mentioning* proclamation in a second-order sense rather than *using* proclamation in a first-order sense.

⁴⁷ Barth, *CD* IV/2, 150.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 122.

summarises his position thus:

In view of what we have just said we will close with an admission of, if you like, a purely formal nature, the significance of which is that it points to the act of confession with which the doctrine of Holy Scripture is really concerned when its content is rightly understood. We have to admit to ourselves and to all who ask us this question that the Bible is the Word of God is an analytical statement, a statement which is grounded only in its repetition, description and interpretation, and not in its derivation from any major propositions. It must be understood as ground in itself and preceding all other statements or it cannot be understood at all. The Bible must be known as the Word of *God* if it is to be *known* as the word of God. The doctrine of Holy Scripture is that this logical circle is self-asserting, self-attesting truth into which it is equally possible to enter as it is to emerge from it: the circle of our freedom which is as such the circle of our captivity.⁵⁰

And, as befits a theologian who prescribes the collapse of hermeneutical realism in the same manner in which he prescribes the collapse of the realist gap in the domain of truth, Barth speaks of his resolution of the hermeneutical problem in the same language he uses in his treatment of the fool in *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*:

For the statement that the Bible is the Word of God we can only give a single and incomparable basis. This is that it is true. This basis either exists of itself or not at all. It is either already known and acknowledged or it is not accepted [*wahrgenommen*].⁵¹

Indeed, as in *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, Barth writes that "there can be no question of a defence and justification of our confession that Holy Scripture is the Word of God"⁵² And, anticipating his response to Thomas's utterance "My Lord and my God", he adds: "Is not every doctrine of Holy Scripture as such a

⁴⁹ "'x' means a" is itself an analytic or a grammatical proposition. To say a bachelor is an unmarried man is to tell us something of the meaning of the word 'bachelor'; it tells us nothing substantive. In Barth's theology to say that the theme is (prototypical) revelation (the theme means revelation) tells us that the concept includes in itself the concept *means revelation*. What appears to be a substantive truth is in Barth's theology in fact an analytic one: "'x' means a" appears a truth of realism but it is not, it is analytic, an (*a posteriori*) analytic truth. As in Wittgenstein substantive hermeneutical theses collapse to grammatical ones: if "'x' means a" is a substantive truth, it must be possible for it to be false other than 'x' not meaning a.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 535.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 535-536. Not perceived at all [*oder gar nicht wahrgenommen wird*] rather than not accepted or (even) not accepted at all. #93 of chapter 7 furnishes an example of Barth's treatment of the fool in *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* that bears comparison with this statement.

⁵² *Ibid*, 461.

superfluous [*überflüssiges*] saying of 'Lord, Lord'?"⁵³

III. Barth, Wittgenstein and the Hermeneutic Problem: the Implications of the Logical (Analytic) Point-of-View.

Barth maintains the analytic-synthetic distinction in the realm of meaning. Quine's dictum "Nothing is unrevisable" implying Bartley's "Criticism everything!" is put in question. Insofar as Wittgenstein too implicitly holds to this distinction, it would follow that he should be out of step with, and indeed essentially critical of, the hermeneutical doctrine Quine derives from his critique of the analytic-synthetic distinction: his doctrine of the indeterminacy of translation.

"Wittgenstein and the Problem of Hermeneutic Understanding"⁵⁴ is the title of a brilliant paper by Stuart Schanker in which he seeks to expose "a fundamental logical fallacy which runs throughout hermeneutic writings and motivates essential hermeneutic attitudes."⁵⁵ Notwithstanding the distinction between modern hermeneutics and analytic philosophy, Schanker assimilates Quine's indeterminacy of translation - a veritable flagship of analytic philosophy - to Jeanrond's model theologian of critical hermeneutics, Bultmann:

Quine's attack on the analytic-synthetic distinction may seem a world (horizon) apart ... but in fact the argument on radical interpretation is simply an anthropological distinction (of sorts) of hermeneutics' 'argument from interpretation'. To see this, consider the similarity between Quine's thesis of the indeterminacy of translation and the hermeneutic concern with the indeterminacy of textual translation. By 'radical translation' Quine is interested in the problem of translation between acutely different languages where the translator has no stock of common words or grammatical structures to help him in the construction of a translation manual. By thus examining how such radical translation would proceed, Quine hopes to clarify the nature of the relation between language and experience. (Compare Bultmann's interest in the relation between interpretation and pre-understanding.)⁵⁶

⁵³ *Ibid*, 461.

⁵⁴ S Schanker, "Wittgenstein and the Problem of Hermeneutic Understanding", in Shanker (ed), *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Critical Assessments*, vol iv, (London, Croom Helm, 1986), 104-115.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 104.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 105.

Quine's indeterminacy of translation is a sceptical dilemma.⁵⁷ It is in fact the limiting case: no matter how much evidence we acquire we cannot in principle be certain what any linguistic utterance means. Yet Quine's 'theorem'⁵⁸ embodies the general form of the scepticism that Bultmann *et al* hope to allay (as Moore attempted to allay Descartes) by closing the hermeneutical circle. In other words, Quine, like Bultmann, affirms a realist hermeneutic.

Schanker cites Karl-Otto Apel as a philosopher who seeks to augment Wittgenstein's position on the hermeneutic problem by seeking certainty in the realm of the transcendental.⁵⁹ Apel introduces a transcendental dimension into Wittgenstein's concept of language-games to combat the sceptical dilemma.⁶⁰ According to Apel, Wittgenstein's concept requires a transcendental argument if it is to close the 'hermeneutical circle'. Hence, like Quine and Bultmann, Apel assumes the necessity of a realist hermeneutic. Wittgenstein's language-games cannot on their own close the realist gap:

On Apel's reading Wittgenstein's conception of language-games marks analytic philosophy's belated attempt to come to terms with the 'hermeneutic problem'. According to Apel, Wittgenstein perceived the fact that in order for two people to communicate successfully they must be participating in the same language-game, but because of his analytic myopia he was unable to discern the transcendental implications of this insight. In the hands of the hermeneutician, Wittgenstein's 'language-game theory' provides an interesting but limited aid to the solution of the hermeneutic problem. Ultimately, the language-game 'theory' proves to be an inferior explanatory model to traditional hermeneutic thought, for Wittgenstein fails even to investigate, let alone establish how we can be certain that we are participating in the same language-game as another.⁶¹

And Schanker adds that 'the hermeneutic problem'

may have started off with the rather exotic case of deciphering ancient tasks, but like Quine's experiment with radical translation it seems to have landed us in very much the same sort of harrowing 'sceptical dilemma', which threatens to undermine our very confidence in any translation or interpretation whatsoever, and indeed, in

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 106.

⁵⁸ See W V O Quine, *Word and Object* (Cambridge, Massachussets, M I T Press, 1960) for his now classic account of indeterminacy of translation.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 107.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 107.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 108-9.

the success of communication within one's immediate communication community.⁶²

But according to Schanker

The irony in Apel's interpretation and subsequent interpretation of Wittgenstein's later philosophy is that Wittgenstein deliberately sets out to demonstrate that the problem raised here is spurious precisely because it rests on a fundamental logical fallacy. Apel shares with many analytic philosophers the belief that Wittgenstein attempts to construct a powerful sceptical attack on the notion of shared communication. But both sides are guilty of mistakenly interpreting as a 'sceptical paradox' what was really intended as a *reductio ad absurdum* whose purpose is to establish the correct logical point-of-view from which we must approach the problem.⁶³

The correct logical point of view differentiates the logical from the epistemological in its various traditional guises: the psychological, the anthropological, the sociological (the non-philosophical). This both Apel and Quine fail to do.

Both Apel and Quine "construct a sceptical dilemma whose genesis lies in the obfuscation between the logical and the epistemological."⁶⁴ Quine's argument of 'radical translation'

confuses the philosophical question - what does our understanding of a native utterance consist in - with the psychological question: how can the radical translator acquire that knowledge. From the logical point-of-view our responsibility is to elucidate in what the translator's mastery of the native language would consist: namely in his conforming to the complex normative behaviour of that community. The crucial point that concerns us here centres on the question of what characterises a *philosophical* problem. As far as philosophy is concerned, it is no part of our task to explain how the radical translator comes to speak the natives' language (although this might well be a question of extreme interest for the anthropologist *manqué*). Wittgenstein's essential point is that from a logical point-of-view our task is purely and solely that of describing in what such mastery would consist. And the solution to this problem is straightforward.⁶⁵

Schanker charges Apel with more of the same. Apel's criticisms of Wittgenstein also derive from his failure to distinguish a philosophical problem from a non-philosophical one:

The very essence of the 'hermeneutic problem' rests on the attempt to provide a

⁶² *Ibid*, 109.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 109.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 114.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 114.

philosophical solution to the question how we can be certain that ... the fragment of an ancient text ... means what we think he/it means. Wittgenstein's answer is: beyond saying 'That is how we use the concepts involved', nothing more need nor can be said. The force of this argument should alert us to the fact that, far from proposing to create or resolve a sceptical paradox in *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein's arguments on rule-following are intended to *dissolve* the problem - just as we should try to dissolve the problems of radical translation and the hermeneutic circle. A proper appreciation of this point serves to undercut Quine and Apel's sceptical worries before they can even begin.⁶⁶

Schanker concludes his paper with the following statement:

Far from being a sceptic, it is as a slayer of paralogisms that Wittgenstein should be read, meticulously enforcing the banishment of epistemological confusions from logical questions. Stripped of their sceptical inspiration, the arguments from radical translation and the hermeneutic circle are vapid and harmless. The Wittgensteinian response to the barren attempts to solve such spurious problems is that they must prove fruitless because the questions involved belonged to that class of puzzle that must be dissolved in order to be resolved. In the sense in which Wittgenstein found so profound, their efforts result in nonsense because they stem from confusion. As disparate as the two disciplines might seem, there is but one method open to us to try and clear a way through their muddle; to clarify the source of the 'hermeneutic problem' in the logical disorder generated by grammatical confusion.⁶⁷

In Barth the parallel is clear. For Barth the Bible is a book that can only be understood within the context of faith described in terms of its object. This means that the (semantic) identity of the Bible cannot be established from the outside, as if it were a 'narrative' external to the theological realm: it is already inside the theological realm. Jeanrond's position on the hermeneutical circle, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, envisaged a situation where the evangelical witness (EW) asserts from the vantage-point of the resurrection appearances "... " of Jesus Christ (JC). This can be represented thus:

EW "... " JC

But what does "... " mean? "... " is identical with EW "... " JC. Thus we first have to establish what "... " means before asserting EW "... " JC. But Barth's objection is this is to presume that it makes sense to establish what "... " means independently of EW "... " JC. If "... " is analytically connected to EW and JC it doesn't make sense. Thus to construe the Bible, and the Gospel narratives in particular, as 'narratives' external to the theological realm is to invent an entirely new text (give

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 114.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 114.

what was hitherto the Bible a new identity) such that the same sentences are now a subset of another (holistic) language (e.g., a critical-historical language or metalanguage). To construe the text 'externally' is to attach a new meaning to the same marks on the page. In other words, it is to speak of something other than that of which Barth speaks (Barth speaks of a text of which it is analytic to say it proclaims Jesus Christ's self-revelation as God).

As in Wittgenstein, for Barth's text the question is not 'How can we acquire knowledge of what the texts mean?'; rather it is 'In what does our understanding consist?'.⁶⁸ This is the sense in which *sui generis* theological truth takes precedence over hermeneutics. We are *already in a position - in medias res* - where the former question is inappropriate. The task of a theological hermeneutics is solely and purely that of describing in what such mastery consists. In the context of prototypical revelation Barth's response too can only be 'That is how we use the concepts'. (Even in 'hermeneutics' Barth remains true to 'God is *God*', for nothing substantive is said of meaning other than this.) Indeterminacy of reference has no logical place in which to operate: we let and cannot but let "the actuality to speak for itself".⁶⁹

Barth pays no heed to the question "How do we know that it means

⁶⁸ In a lecture on the Authority and Significance of the Bible at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey (Switzerland) Barth elucidated the term "analytical statement" by the following example: "When you ask a boy: Why do you call, among all the women in the world, this one your mother?, his only answer is: Because she *is* my mother. That is the *fact* on which he proceeds." Quoted in K Runia, *Karl Barth's Doctrine of Scripture* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Wm B Eerdmans, 1962), 7. This is the position, the logical point-of-view, Barth takes on the Bible. Why do you call the Bible the Word of God? Because, within the context of faith described in terms of its object, it is the Word of God and cannot but be the Word of God. Barth's position is very much more subtle than the standard simple fideistic interpretation of his answer. His position, his logical point-of-view repudiates all other (realist) positions, other (realist) points-of-view, from which criticism could have been forth-coming.

⁶⁹ Hence, as in Wittgenstein, collapsing the realist gap rules out all species of subjectivist answers to the question 'What is the theme of the text?' If there is no question of the theme of the text meaning other than revelation then the meaning is neither the intention of the author (Schleiermacher) nor a species of mentalese (Hume's 'private language'). We do not have to understand what is going on in the writer's (or writers') head: no transcendental solution is necessary. Schanker's anti-transcendental view of Wittgenstein is shared by other commentators, e.g., Hacker *Insight*, 210. Baker and Hacker's critique of S Kripke's sceptical interpretation of Wittgenstein (S Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1982)) is implicitly anti-transcendental. G P Baker and P M S Hacker, *Scepticism, Rules and Language* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1984).

revelation?" For a person who has mastered these concepts, the assertion 'I know that the text means revelation' is a logical insight: "The Bible must be known as the Word of *God* if it is to be *known* as the word of God."

To be sure, as in Wittgenstein, there is always the possibility one might misunderstand that the theme of the text is revelation. This is a possibility just as much as is misunderstanding that "bachelor" means an unmarried man. Yet since there is no 'outside' the realm of faith described in terms of its object, such misunderstanding can only be *misunderstanding within the context of prototypical revelation*; hence, as in Wittgenstein, it can be rectified simply by learning and mastering the concepts. In that sense, there is scope for an 'internal' hermeneutics.

All this transpires within a quasi-Hegelian space. For if Scripture is indirectly identical with the *sui generis* theological realm then it is but a short step to saying that Scripture is indirectly identical with *God*. For someone who had stressed the Otherness of God in *Romans* II, such a position may have appeared, at best, a neo-orthodox identification of the Bible with revelation, at worst, a shameful retreat to what Barth had earlier condemned as the apotheosising tendencies of liberal theology:

... as this word of testimony, as the sign of the revelation which has taken place and does take place, and indeed, as we saw, as the sign posited in and with revelation itself, as the witness of witnesses directly called in and with revelation itself, Scripture too, stands in that indirect identity of human existence with God Himself.⁷⁰

Yet Barth was an advocate of neither. What he meant was quite clear.

But in its own way and degree it is very God and very man, i.e., a witness of revelation which itself belongs to revelation⁷¹

IV. That There is Proclamation At All (The 'Thatness' of Proclamation): The Work of the Holy Spirit.

Barth distinguishes the 'whatness' of proclamation from the 'thatness' of proclamation, that the proclamation exists at all from what it means, (the existence of, from the essence of, proclamation). What proclamation is - the 'whatness' of

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 500.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 501.

proclamation - what it means, is due to Easter: Jesus Christ's self-revelation. But that there is proclamation at all - the 'thatness' of proclamation - is due to Pentecost: the work of the Holy Spirit. This is the sense in which proclamation and its literary heir, the Bible, is divinely inspired, the sense in which Barth adhered to a (Reformed) doctrine of (verbal) inspiration.⁷²

Due to his infirmity and failing energy in old age, Barth did not even begin work on, far less execute, the fifth and final part proper of the *Church Dogmatics*, the Doctrine of Redemption. *Inter alia*, this left him vulnerable to the criticism that his treatment of the Third Person of the Trinity such as there was, was less convincing than his treatment of the First and Second Persons. Robert Jenson writes:

In general, Barth's discussions of the Spirit are not so convincing as his discussions of the Father and the Son. It is hard to see that what is said has not been said before. In contrast to Barth's usual fullness and determination to be understood at all costs, we find here brief concatenations of hints and dicta. One is even tempted to think that the incompleteness of the *Church Dogmatics*, with the eschatology and the doctrine of the Spirit missing, is not merely a matter of chronology.⁷³

Though it is by no means certain that had Barth had his say, all such criticism would have been preempted and perhaps never have arisen in the first place, and though any attempt to fulfil Barth's plan for the envisaged final part of the *Church Dogmatics* runs the risk Sussmayr ran when he set himself to the task of envisaging how Barth's great love Mozart might have brought his *Requiem* to a conclusion - yet such cautionary counsel notwithstanding, Barth's doctrine of the

⁷² Barth's doctrine of inspiration does not, and, given the conclusions of § II of this chapter, need not, affirm the inerrancy of Scripture. Thus he can assert that: "The men who we hear as witnesses speak as fallible, erring men like ourselves. [...] We can establish lacunae, inconsistencies and overemphases." Barth, *CD* I/2, 507. Again: "The prophets and apostles as such, even in their office, even in their function as witnesses, even in the act of writing down their witness, were real, historical men as we are ... and capable and actually guilty of error in their written and spoken word." *Ibid*, 529. Necessarily, the witnesses as bearer of the proclamation/text proclaim the Gospel from within the context of faith described in terms of its object. Thus the errors they make are necessarily made within this context, and could not but be made from within this context. This is why Barth need not invoke the inerrancy of Scripture to preserve the infallibility of Scripture. What makes the Bible the Bible is not that it is in itself divine but that it is written within the context of faith described in terms of its object. This is the deep reason behind Barth's statement that if driven to choose between the critical-historical method and the "venerable doctrine of inspiration, he should "without hesitation adopt the latter, which has a broader, deeper, more important justification [*das grössere, tiefere, wichtigere Recht*]." Barth, *CR* II, 1. In relation to the 'inspired' proclamation/text, the critical-historical method can only be practised within the context of faith described in terms of its object.

⁷³ Jenson, *God After God*, 173.

Holy Spirit is the final essential piece of the jigsaw of his *sui generis* theology. It is no exaggeration to say that without the Third Person of the Trinity Barth could not have conceived himself as the man he was and had been, a man doing theology in the historical flux of time; could not have conceived how proclamation from the pulpit, past, present or future, was possible; could not have conceived how it was possible that proclamation exist at all.

Not only is *sui generis* theological truth incomplete if it does not include our asserting theological truth, the assertion of *sui generis* theological truth is impossible without the Third Person of the Trinity. The theological realm includes (is indeed incomplete if does not include) our proclaiming the theological realm. The 'thatness' of that proclamation - and therefore that there are Christians - is the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus the theological realm is incomplete if does not include the Holy Spirit; the theological realm is incomplete if it does not include *our proclaiming* the work of the Holy Spirit.

In *Dogmatics in Outline*, in the chapter on the third article of the Creed, the Third Person of the Trinity, Barth issues a statement that, initially at least, is not even a statement on the Holy Spirit *per se*; rather it appears to be no more than a simple declaration of the fact that that there are Christians is a miracle. Yet it constitutes no less than a sufficient condition of the possibility of *sui generis* theology; and *inter alia* it leads to the conclusion that that there is proclamation at all is a miracle for which we should be thankful each time it occurs:

In the exposition of the first article of the Confession I said that creation is not a lesser miracle than the birth of Christ of the Virgin. And now thirdly I should like to say that the fact that there are Christians, men who have this freedom, is no lesser miracle than the birth of Jesus Christ of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, or the creation of the world out of nothing. For if we remember who and how we are, we might well cry out, 'Lord, have mercy upon us'. For this miracle the disciples wait ten days after the Lord's Ascension into heaven. Not until after this pause does the outpouring of the Holy Spirit take place and with it the new community arises. There takes place a new act of God, which, like all God's acts, is a confirmation of the preceding ones.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, 139. In his earlier exposition of the Apostles' Creed, in the chapter headed "Credo in Spiritum Sanctum", Barth wrote:

"It could well be asked whether the step which is once more made here in the revelation of the Spirit is not *still* greater, more astonishing, stranger than the step from Good Friday to Easter, from the revelation of the Father to the revelation of

But it is not merely that Barth sanctions the view that the fact there are Christians (and that there is proclamation) is a miracle. It is rather that he affirms such a view as it applies to those who have already had the privilege of the encounter with Easter, those who are already *in* the context of faith described in terms of its object, the theological realm circumscribed by the Empty Tomb, Jerusalem, Galilee, the Forty Days. Barth's statement that that there are Christians is a miracle is not affirmed in the absence of Easter, it is affirmed within the context of the presence of Easter. Easter, like creation, like the Virgin Birth is one miracle and the fact that there are Christians is another separate causally independent miracle, equal in the miracle stakes to the others.

In other words, that that there are Christians is a miracle *already* presupposes Easter (as described in Barth's theology). That means that the event of Easter (as described in Barth's theology) underdetermines, is not, either logically or casually, a sufficient condition of, *proclamation*.⁷⁵ Not only is Easter not a sufficient condition of that part of the *credo* that is "I believe in God the Holy Spirit", (which is as it should be since Pentecost is still off in the future), much more paradoxical is that it is not a sufficient condition of "I believe in God the Son" or "I believe in God the Father". Even in the wake of Easter the witnesses are a group of individuals awaiting the miracle that they will proclaim what it is they will proclaim, which is to say they are awaiting the miracle of becoming *Christians*. In the *sui generis* theological realm, Easter without the Holy Spirit is a world without prototypical proclamation; hence a world without proclamation; a world without *sui generis* theology; a world without the *Church Dogmatics*.

The fact that there are people who proclaim that they believe in *God* (or

the Son. It is at least *equally* great." Barth, *Credo*, translated by J S McNab, (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1936), 133.

It is worth noting that in keeping with the tenets of *sui generis* theology Barth affirms that the third article of the Creed "even at this place remains, *theological*." *Ibid*, 128.

⁷⁵ This would appear to be another argument in favour of an interpretation of Barth's theology that eliminates realism from prototypical revelation. For under realism there is a ready-made explanation of proclamation making the work of the Holy Spirit and the event of Pentecost redundant. In other words, realism, as it has been construed here, contradicts the doctrine of the Trinity (reducing it to a biunity) since the Holy Spirit need not have a role in proclamation. It is *surplus to requirements*.

even, simply believe in *God*) that is, believe in Jesus Christ (proclaim the Gospel story) - all this is a miracle *even* given the first two "moments" of revelation. In Barth's theology *believing in God* is necessarily an expression of the existence of the Church or it is not believing in God, not believing in *God*.

This is no less true of present and future Christians than it was of the Apostles. If I proclaim Easter then I speak the truth, but if I assert that I proclaim Easter solely because of Easter then I speak falsely. My metaChristian utterances are called into question if I omit to say that my Christian affirmation - the fact of affirming itself - is prototypically instantiated by Pentecost. Pentecost, like Easter, is to be taken prototypically, not literally.⁷⁶

Thus Barth calls us to celebrate - not merely that we are Christians, (though that follows as a corollary), but - more abstractly (in a way Barth would have appreciated) - *that* there are Christians (the 'thatness' of the Christian), transposing the profundity of Heidegger's question "Why is there something rather than nothing?" to the fact that there are Christians.

**V. After *God* Reveals Himself and *God* reveals *Himself* (Easter)
Comes *God* Reveals Himself *Through Himself* (Pentecost): the
Authorisation to Speak About *God* (Prototypical Proclamation).**

Faith emerges as a historical factor. Out of Easter inevitably ensues Pentecost. Pentecost enters the *sui generis* equivalent of the philosophical theologian's metaphysical vocabulary as *prototypical* proclamation.

According to the New Testament account, it was not in the events of the forty days directly and as such that there took place the beginning of the existence of the community and of the going out of the apostles to the people of Jerusalem, let alone to the nations. In the events of the forty days the disciples were ordained and commissioned for this task, but in the strict sense these events are only the presupposition of this happening which began with the story of Pentecost. It is only in and with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that the faith of the disciples is revealed as such and becomes a historical [*geschichtlichen*] factor. It is only there that they become what they are here ordained and commissioned to be - those who bear the kerygma. It is only there that the community develops from its original form as the company of disciples believing in the living Jesus Christ into the Church which grows and expands in the world. It is only there that there is laid the indispensable foundation for this building which does inevitably [*unvermeidlich*]

⁷⁶ See chapter three, #89.

follow the Easter happening. We can say that this foundation was the faith of the disciples in the living Jesus Christ and therefore that what took place in the forty days was the laying of this foundation. We have to distinguish between the act of laying a foundation, the creation of a presupposition, and the result of this act or action. In the strict sense the Easter narratives do not speak so much of the result as of the act as such.⁷⁷

Theological truth must be extended the span of the Trinity if the Word is to enter the world of our word, is to become proclamation. In other words, though the possibility of such a historical phenomenon inevitably ensues from theological truth, the very possibility of the *assertion* of theological truth is itself impossible without the Third Person of the Trinity. That is to say, as historical [*geschichtlichen*] factor it coincides with the authorisation to *speak* about Christ. Where Easter is prototypically *inter alia* the scene of our failure to speak about God, Pentecost is prototypically the scene of our empowerment to speak about God,⁷⁸ which latter is the essence of being a Christian.⁷⁹

The theological realm circumscribed by faith described in terms of its object is the Christocentric locus of *God* reveals Himself and God reveals *Himself*. This was one of the results of chapter 3. But, as was also evident in chapter 3, these two 'moments' of revelation are functions of a trinitarian structure that also (necessarily)

⁷⁷ Barth, CD IV/1 338.

⁷⁸ In other words, the fact that there are Christians remains a miracle. Had we followed the resurrection witnesses in the wake of Easter, we would have witnessed no proclamation passing from their lips - *pace* Easter. In postmodern terms, the original ending to *Mark*, "They said nothing because they were afraid", the greatest literary mystery of all, falsified in the very act of its assertion, signifies the tension between failure to speak - faith described in terms of its object - and the dawn of Christian speech and history ushered in by the Holy Spirit.

⁷⁹ Barth notes that when the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed speaks of the Holy Spirit, it uses the Greek word for "Lord" adjectivally: it is neuter. This corresponds to his view that "even if the Father and the Son might be called 'person' (in the modern sense of the term, the Holy Spirit could not possibly be regarded as the third 'person'". Barth, CD I/1, 469. Thus the mystery of proclamation notwithstanding, (the mystery of the Holy Spirit-man relation notwithstanding) there is only one person, not two persons, involved in the act of proclamation. There is only one *person* - the whole human person. For Barth it is the whole human being - the Christian - who proclaims the Gospel: "Where men may receive and possess the Holy Spirit, it is of course a human experience and a human act. It is also a matter of the understanding and of the will and, I might indeed say, of the imagination. This too belongs to being a Christian. The *whole* man, right into the inmost regions of the so-called 'unconscious', is taken into claim. God's relation to man includes the whole of him." Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, 139-140.

includes a third moment of revelation, God reveals Himself *through Himself*.⁸⁰ This is the sphere of the Holy Spirit. In other words, theological truth must extend the temporal span of the trinity and not be restricted to: *God* reveals Himself and God reveals *Himself*. The prototypical instantiation of God reveals Himself *through Himself* is anticipated in I/1, the 'preliminary leap into the subject-matter itself', where Barth speaks about the work of the Holy Spirit:

the Holy Spirit is the authorisation [*Befähigung*] to speak about Christ; he is the equipment of the prophet and the apostle; he is the summons to the Church to administer the word. To the extent that everything in which this authorisation, equipment and summons consists ... - is directed to this goal, to the extent that it cannot be a private affair but only the affair of the church, or rather the Lord of the church, if there are individuals to whom the spirit guarantees that God's revelation comes to them, individuals whom the spirit constrains - to that extent we shall have to call this third operation of the Spirit the decisive one. If we ask concerning the mind of the Spirit ... we must answer that it consists in the fact that he is the gift of speaking about the "wonderful works of God". If we ask what it means to receive and possess this gift we shall constantly have to read off the answer from the first two definitions of our concept.⁸¹

The faith of the disciples is itself historically revealed in their speaking about Christ, that is, speaking Christocentrically about God. Moreover, God reveals Himself *through Himself*, prototypically instantiated at Pentecost, is itself a description of the course of history [*Geschichte*] of the proclamation of the Gospel, a revealing *through Himself* correlated to the geometric progression or series depicting the spread of Gospel proclamation through mission.⁸² There are

⁸⁰ See chapter 3, 125-129.

⁸¹ Barth, *CD I/1*, 455-456. The other two operations of the Spirit are: the Spirit guarantees for man what he cannot guarantee himself, his personal participation in revelation; the Spirit gives man instruction and guidance he cannot give himself. Barth, *CD I/1*, 453-454.

⁸² Hence, though both the proclamations that are *The Acts of the Apostles* and the four Gospels are impossible without the Holy Spirit, the former is to be distinguished from the latter in that where the latter is the proclamation of Christ, the former is *inter alia* the proclamation of the Apostles proclaiming Christ. It is also the proclamation of the Third person of the Trinity, itself the authorisation to proclaim. In other words, God reveals Himself *through Himself* is itself a subject of revelation. The Holy Spirit is not only the authorisation to proclaim the Gospel - Jesus Christ - it reveals *itself* through itself. The Holy Spirit (God) reveals Himself through Himself. That is why *The Acts of the Apostles* is part of the Canon: it is a Church document about the acts of the Holy Spirit, a Church document about the *proclamation* of Christ risen; as opposed to the Gospels, which are Church documents about Christ risen. Barth's perichoretic treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity recapitulates *God* reveals Himself and God reveals *Himself* (*Jesus Christ* reveals Himself and Jesus Christ reveals *Himself*), in *The Holy Spirit* reveals itself and the Holy Spirit reveals *itself*. This is the rationale behind the proclamation of prototypical proclamation - Pentecost (and the ensuing events) -

proclaimers with corresponding hearers who then become proclaimers, and so on. Notwithstanding his vehement opposition to the *analogia entis*, Barth's theology of proclamation is a "High Church" of proclamation. In other words, in Barth's theology proclamation is attributed an importance analogous to that attributed to the sacrament of eucharist in the Roman Catholic Church though without the accompanying sacramental status.⁸³ Insofar as Barth accords proclamation, respect, deference, indeed veneration analogous to that which the Roman Catholic Church accords the eucharist, Barth's profoundly Reformed orientation is no less a variation on the theme of *Veni Spiritus Sancti*.

Barth thus sustains continuity between past and present (and future).⁸⁴ As befits a prolegomena, *Church Dogmatics* I/1 circumscribes the domain of theology as that which is precisely continuous with the proclamation of the witnesses of revelation.

For a better understanding one should note first what we have first called the similarity as phenomena between Church proclamation and this second entity which confronts it in the Church, namely, the Canon of Holy Scripture. This consists in the fact that in Holy Scripture, too, the writing is obviously not primary but secondary. It is itself the deposit of what was once proclamation by human lips. In its form as Scripture, however, it does not seek to be a historical monument but rather a Church document, written proclamation. The two entities may thus be set initially under a single genus, Scripture as the commencement and present day preaching as the continuation of one and the same event, Jeremiah and Paul at the beginning and the modern preacher of the Gospel at the end of one and the same series.⁸⁵

It is thus a mistake to characterise Barth's theology as "a monistic truth of Christ" if this means a theology that shuns the post-Easter post-Pentecost history of

in *The Acts of the Apostles*.

⁸³ But for Barth, there is only one sacrament, properly speaking - the Incarnation. Barth, *CD* IV/4. Nevertheless, it is true to say that proclamation is assigned a higher status than either the sacrament of baptism or of the eucharist.

⁸⁴ In this way Barth replaces the Roman Catholic doctrine of *Apostolic succession* with continuity of a different kind: the continuity of proclamation. Nevertheless, he can still speak of *succession* (Barth, *CD* I/1, 102), adding that "[t]his concept from the Roman Catholic definition of the ecclesiastical office is also one which intrinsically need not give rise to any objection." *Ibid*, 103.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 102. Barth tends to refer to the Bible as a whole as proclamation but strictly speaking only the Gospel stories and *Acts* are proclamation - prototypical proclamation. Even the Pauline epistles are records of Paul's proclamation rather than his proclamation as such. Moreover, most of the books in the Old Testament are history, legal codes, legend, not proclamation.

Christian proclamation as it has continued through the ages to the present time.

Concluding Remarks.

Yet that proclamation past, present, future exists at all, has been elected *ad intra*.⁸⁶ To be sure, the election of Grace is the sum of the Gospel. Barth's doctrine of election is organised around the Second Person of the Trinity. But given that God reveals Himself *through Himself* emerges "inevitably" from *God* reveals Himself and God reveals *Himself*, that need not have excluded the Holy Spirit from the doctrine.

Williams refers to the "near total lack of reference to the Spirit in Jüngel's [*Doctrine of the Trinity: God's Being is in Becoming*]"⁸⁷ Whether this fact is explicable by Barth's failure to produce an adequate theology of the Holy Spirit has to be weighed against another fact, namely that Jüngel's book is a blue-print of at least one of the defining parameters of Barth's doctrine of the Holy Spirit. In an assertion that he clearly believes gets to the heart of the matter of the *Church Dogmatics*. Jüngel writes:

"When it is now said of the revelation of God that it has 'it own basis and prototype in his own essence, in his own being as God', then this basis and prototype in the essence and being of God must also belong to its reality and truth. That means, however, that God's being *ad extra* corresponds essentially to his being *ad intra* in which it has its basis and prototype. God's *self*-interpretation (revelation) is interpretation as correspondence. Let it be well noted: *as* his own *interpreter* God corresponds to his own being."⁸⁸

The implication of this statement is not often if ever elicited. Yet not to apprehend its meaning is to misunderstand the whole point of the book. It means:

God interprets Himself interpreting Himself or God reveals Himself
revealing Himself.

⁸⁶ For Barth to be a Christian is to proclaim; hence to be elected a Christian is to be elected to do one thing - proclaim. "The determination of the elect is to be its witness" Barth, *CD* II/2, 414. "He is elected in order to break forth with his weak voice. [...] If he does not, he necessarily compromises and denies his election." *Ibid*, 414. "Each elect individual is as such a messenger of God. This is his service and commission." *Ibid*, 415.

⁸⁷ R Williams, "Barth on the Triune God", in Sykes (ed), *Karl Barth: Studies of His Theological Method*, 171.

⁸⁸ Jüngel, *The Doctrine of the Trinity. God's Being is in Becoming*, translated by H Harris, (Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1976), 23-4.

It is precisely why Jüngel makes a distinction in the preface to this book that may appear to be a oversubtle nuance, even an instance of theological hair-splitting: "You may be put off by the title of this book. Yet I ask you to read it again carefully. It is not about a 'God who becomes'. God's being is not to be identified with God's becoming; rather, God's being is ontologically localised."⁸⁹ In other words, "'Becoming' ... indicates the manner in which God's being [*ad intra*] exists."⁹⁰ Thus, given God reveals Himself revealing Himself, God reveals Himself *through Himself ad extra* corresponds to God reveals Himself *through Himself ad intra*. But God reveals Himself *through Himself* is conjoined to the proclamation both by the community and by the individual. Therefore if the whole of theological truth *ad extra* corresponds to the whole of theological truth *ad intra*, then man as proclaimer - individually and collectively - is anticipated *ad intra*.

Far from the Holy Spirit being of secondary importance, it would have secured the small step from elected proclamation *ad extra* to the electing of proclamation *ad intra* - had Barth completed the doctrine of Redemption in the *Church Dogmatics*. Then it really would have been possible to talk of a *sui generis* Christian universe, one whose parameters, anthropically speaking, necessitated the fact that that there are Christians is necessary itself.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, vii.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, vii.

Epilogue

1920 was, as Busch tells us in his biography of Barth, "the year in which Barth subjected the view he had presented in *Romans* I to new criticism, and rethought it after varied and intensive study."¹ Above all, it was, as we know, Overbeck's critique of theology which precipitated rewriting *Romans* I. In the midst of this study, Busch also tells us, Barth "found the painter Matthias Grünewald illuminating."² The extent of the illumination can be measured from the fact that for the rest of his life Barth worked with a copy of Grünewald's painting of the crucifixion - the centre-piece of the famous Isenheim Altar-piece - hanging above his desk.

To be sure, Barth expressed the following famous thought on the figure of John the Baptist in a lecture he presented in April 1920 entitled "Biblical Questions, Insights and Vistas":

We think of John the Baptist in Grünewald's crucifixion with his hand pointing in an almost impossible way. It is this hand which is in evidence in the Bible.³

Yet it is clear it is Christ on the cross and not John the Baptist who is the central presence in the painting. Grünewald's painting of the crucifixion conveys with utmost realism the suffering of Christ on the cross. As Kenneth Clark put it in his book *The Nude*:

... Grünewald's Isenheim altar-piece where the scars and blood-stains made familiar in popular wood-cuts or *biblia pauperum* are overwhelmingly magnified. This is the most corporeal of all Crucifixions, in which every line contributes to the image of an organism in torment. Never before or since have the sufferings of Christ been made so real to us.⁴

The dimensions of every detail of his body on the cross are "overwhelmingly magnified" according to Clark. This is realism and yet it is not realism. E H Gombrich discerns just such a paradox at the centre of the painting:

In this picture in which reality seems to be depicted in all its unmitigated horror, there is one real and fantastic trait: the figures differ greatly in size. We only have to compare the size of the hands of Mary Magdalene under the cross with those of

¹ Busch, *Barth*, 114.

² *Ibid*, 144.

³ Barth, "Biblical Questions, Insights and Vistas", *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, 65.

⁴ K Clark, *The Nude: a Study of ideal Art* (London, Murray, 1956), 226.

Christ to become fully aware of the astonishing difference in their dimensions.⁵

The painter known as Grünewald (real name now thought to be Mathis Gothardt-Nithardt) lived in the sixteenth century, a century after the Italian Renaissance artist (architect) Brunellesco who may still be reckoned the inventor (or discoverer) of mathematical perspective. Yet Grünewald's painting, as Gombrich will tell us, is painted without utilising the classical theory of mathematical perspective (a theory he would have known). In fact, like the Greeks before him who understood foreshortening, and the Hellenistic painters who were skilled in creating the illusion of depth, but did not know the mathematical laws of perspective, Grünewald draws near or important things large and distant things small. The rationale behind this conscious artistic decision is the text behind John the Baptist's pointing hand. It is taken from *John* 3.3 and says: "He must increase, while I must decrease."

Transposed to the realm of Barth's theology, "He must increase, while I must decrease" encapsulates the relationship between God and man in that sphere of the theological realm where man encounters his God. In other words, though God's grace grants the figure of John the Baptist a place within the theological realm, the presence of the fantastic realism intimates there is no logical space for him:⁶ faith described in terms of its object means man *gives way* to God's revelation; actuality speaks for itself; saying collapses to showing; both *sui generis* theological truth and the resolution of the metatheological dilemma are preserved.

"Christ must increase, while I must decrease." On his deathbed Wittgenstein uttered the words, "Tell them I had a wonderful life!" To say that Wittgenstein said this in the 'sure and certain hope of being with Christ' is too fanciful, not to say pretentious. Yet Wittgenstein was a man who lived religiously rather than morally; and the pride of Lucifer notwithstanding he would, I think, have been more than

⁵ E H Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: a Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (London, Pantheon Books, 1960), 104.

⁶ As Barth himself puts it: "Near the steadily pointing figure of his John are the words, *Illum oportet crescere, me autem minui*. The prophet, the man of God, the seer and hearer, ceases to be, as that to which he unwaveringly points begins to be." Barth, "Biblical Questions, Insights and Vistas", *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, 75.

prepared to give up the ghost to 'be in the presence of the Lord'.

"Christ must increase, while I must decrease." Barth's time came some time in the middle of the night. His wife found him the next morning, as if asleep, his hands clasped from his evening prayers. Is it too fanciful to imagine that the Mozart playing in the background, with which she had wanted to wake him, was the second movement, the 'Prayer for Peace' from Mozart's *Exaltate Jubilate*?

Appendix I

The Structure of *Prosologion* 2-3 in *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum*.

Pros. 2

Anselm begins *Pros.* 2 with:

Therefore, Lord, who givest knowledge to faith, grant in whatever measure thou wilt, that I may know that thou dost exist as we believe and that thou art what we believe.

[*Ergo Domine, qui das fidei intellectum, da mihi, ut quantum scis expendere, intelligam quia es sicut credimus, et hoc es quod credimus.*] (*FQI*, 101)

2.1 But we believe: Thou art 'something beyond which nothing greater can be conceived'.

[*Et quidem credimus te esse aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari possit.*] (102)

Subsequently the 'proof proper' begins (123):

2.2 And certainly 'that than which nothing greater can be conceived' cannot exist only in knowledge.

[*Et certe id quo maius cogitari nequit, non potest esse in solo intellectu.*] (123)

2.3 If it exists thus only in knowledge it can also be conceived as existing objectively, ... [which] is greater [than existing only in knowledge].

[*Si enim vel in solo intellectu est, potest cogitari esse et in re, quod maius est.*] (124-5)

2.4 When, therefore, 'that than which a greater cannot be conceived' exists only in knowledge then 'that than which a greater cannot be conceived' is such than which a greater can be conceived. But this clearly cannot be.

[*Si ergo id quo maius cogitari non potest, est in solo intellectu: id ipsum quo maius cogitari non potest, est quo maius cogitari potest. Sed certe hoc esse non potest.*] (126)

2.5 Thus objectively as well as in knowledge there does undoubtedly exist 'something than which nothing greater can be conceived'.

[*Existit ergo procul dubio aliquid quo maius cogitari non valet, et in intellectu et in re.*] (127)

Pros. 3

A similar logical structure can be discerned in *Pros. 3*:

3.1 That [God] could not be conceived as not existing.

[*Quod non possit cogitari non esse.*] (132)

3.2 It is possible to conceive as existing something which cannot be conceived as not existing: that which is greater than what can be conceived as not existing.

[*Nam potest cogitari esse aliquid, quod non possit cogitari non esse; quod maius est, quam quod non esse cogitari potest.*] (140)

3.3 When therefore 'that than which a greater cannot be conceived' can be conceived as not existing, then 'that than which a greater cannot be conceived' is not 'that than which a greater cannot be conceived'. Which is a contradiction.

[*Quare si id quo maius nequit cogitari, potest cogitari non esse: id ipsum quo maius cogitari nequit non est id quo maius cogitari nequit non est id quo maius cogitari nequit; quod convenire non potest.*] (142)

3.4 Therefore 'something which beyond which nothing greater can be conceived' exists in reality in such a manner that it cannot be conceived as not existing.

[*Sic ergo vere est aliquid quo maius cogitari non potest, ut nec cogitari possit non esse.*] (143)

At 3.5 Anselm says the following:

And this thou art, O Lord our God. Thou dost exist in truth in such a way that thou canst not be conceived as not existing. And that with reason. For if any and every mind were able to conceive of something better than thee then the creature would be rising above the Creator. This would be most absurd.

[*Et hoc es tu, Domine Deus noster. Sic ergo vere es, Domine Deus meus, ut nec cogitari possis non esse: et merito. Si enim aliqua mens posset cogitare aliquid melius te, ascenderet creatura puer Creatorum et indicaret de Creatore, quod valde est absurdum.*] (150)

Appendix II

Glossary

Metatheological: Although the etymology of the word 'metaphysics' involves the meaning 'after' (Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, and hence later its subject, was so-called because it followed the *Physics*), the usual meaning of 'meta' is 'about' as in 'meta-ethics', 'metahistory', and 'metalanguage'. Accordingly, where (Christian) theology is 'about' God, Jesus Christ, etc., (which constitute the 'objects' of theology), 'metatheological' is 'about' theology (i.e., theology itself constitutes the object of metatheological discourse); exactly the same distinction holds in the case of 'metaphilosophical': metaphilosophy is about philosophy, which in turn is 'about': mind, rationality, etc. Thus, for example, where philosophy might enquire into the existence of mind, metaphilosophy would enquire into the existence of philosophy itself. Accordingly, if it were demonstrated that philosophy did not exist then the question of the existence of mind would not be a philosophical question though it might well be a scientific (psychological or physiological) one. Similarly, if theology did not exist then questions related to the nature and existence of God would not be theological though it might be appropriate for science to study them.

Sui generis: In the wake of Overbeck's metatheological dilemma theology was faced with two equally undesirable alternatives: do non-theology or nothing. To resolve this dilemma theology as non-theology (history, anthropology, etc.) had to be displaced by a theology whose (descriptive) rationality was of its own kind, peculiar, unique (*sui generis*). Though this is in fact what Barth found when he looked into the Bible (finding the "strange new world within the Bible") it is not *a priori* inconceivable that he might have been faced everywhere in the Bible with the descriptive rationality of *Historie*; in which case theology as non-theology would have supplied an exhaustive definition of theology. Happily for Barth the world of the Bible is a "strange new world" since (i) it is 'inhabited' above all by the resurrection appearances, but also by the empty tomb, the Virgin Birth - and angels; (ii) these 'objects' have their own peculiar, unique (descriptive) rationality. (i) on its own is not a sufficient condition of avoiding the reduction of theology to non-theology.

Autonomy: As Kant defined autonomy as the self-determination of the will, apart from any object willed, then so, transposed to theology, autonomy implies the self-determination of theology apart from any external objects i.e. non-theology (history, anthropology). This is not necessarily the same thing as being *insulated* from criticism from other subjects. For Barth autonomy did not exclude criticism (see below at **(Barthian) Criticism**).

Prototypical revelation: Prototypical revelation - necessarily identical with the resurrection-appearances of Jesus Christ - is related to the sense of *prototypal*, meaning "the first or primary type of anything; a pattern, model, standard, exemplar,

archetype." (OED). The resurrection-appearances are the "true, original, typical [*eigenliche, ursprüngliche, exemplarische*] form" of God's self-revelation and "therefore of revelation generally which lights up for the first time all God's revealing and being revealed (in Him and generally)." (Barth, *CD IV/1*, 301). The "formal side of the resurrection of Christ" was the "true and original and typical form of revelation of God made in Him." (*Ibid*, 302). The "event of Easter must be understood as the true and original and typical act of revelation, and therefore as an act of God *sui generis*" (*Ibid*, 304-305). In other words, *prototypical revelation*, summarising as it does the "true and original and typical" form of revelation, is the prototype of revelation generally: the form of revelation generally - revelation to those of us who were not witnesses to prototypical revelation - is necessarily formally identical with its Christocentric expression in the Gospels. *Jesus Christ* reveals Himself and Jesus Christ reveals *Himself* embody forms which, abstracted from the resurrection-appearances themselves, constitute the identity of revelation generally as in *God* reveals Himself and God reveals *Himself*.

Fideism: "the view, recurrent throughout religious history, that essential religious doctrines cannot be established by rational means, but only accepted, if at all, by acts of faith. Its extreme form (for example in Kierkegaard) holds that religion requires the acceptance of doctrines actually absurd or contrary to reason." (Entry under "Fideism", Flew (ed), *A Dictionary of Philosophy*.) A spectrum of fideisms is possible, some more 'fideistic' than others. One can have insufficient reason, no reason or reason to the contrary for believing in specific religious or theological doctrines.

Historicism: Traditionally historicism has meant one of two things: on the one hand an exclusive dependence on e.g. Troeltsch's principles of historical enquiry (the habituation on principle to historical criticism; analogy; and the mutual interrelation of all historical developments (correlation)) such as one finds in the critical-historical school; on the other, the sort of historical determinism advocated by Marx in his analysis of the development of society and heavily criticised by Popper. I use the term *positively*: as an expression of historical *contingency*, that is, to refer to the possibility that history at any moment of time did not have to be as it was. In using the term in this way I am following closely the example of John Milbank's *Theology and Social Theory* e.g. Marx fails to "historicize Feuerbach to the extent that he sees religion as always occupying the same superstructural position in any possible society. Marx says that religion *as religion* has no history, undergoes no development. By contrast, Hegel is much more historicist at this point: in certain societies, religion may stand close to the realm of 'art', in others to the area of ordinary social transactions." (182-183). Thus for Milbank religion can still be *religion* without occupying the same superstructural position in society. Analogously, the Enlightenment could still have been the Enlightenment without having had dualism and mechanism on its agenda. Indeed historically the Enlightenment legacy has not bequeathed these two theses.

(Barthian) Criticism: Without criticism, autonomy is equivalent to fideism. But criticism is not absent from Barth since prototypical revelation criticises all stand-points from which criticism would have been possible had prototypical revelation been the kind of object that could have been criticised (the direction of criticism goes the other way). Thus criticism in Barth logically (rationally) repudiates the basis on which criticism of prototypical revelation could have been made.

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